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THE WHITE COMPANY.

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CHAPTER XV.

HOW THE YELLOW COG SAILED FORTH FROM LEPE.

THAT night the Company slept at St. Leonard's, in the great monastic barns and spicarium—ground well known both to Alleyne and to John, for they were almost within sight of the Abbey of Beaulieu. A strange thrill it gave to the young squire to see the well-remembered white dress once more, and to hear the measured tolling of the deep vespers bell. At early dawn they passed across the broad, sluggish, reed-girt stream—men, horses, and baggage in the flat ferry barges—and so journeyed on through the fresh morning air past Exbury to Lepe. Topping the heathy down, they came of a sudden full in sight of the old sea-port—a cluster of houses, a trail of blue smoke, and a bristle of masts. To right and left the long blue curve of the Solent lapped in a fringe of foam upon the yellow beach. Some way out from the town a line of pessoners, creyers, and other small craft were rolling lazily on the gentle swell. Further out still lay a great merchant-ship, high ended, deep waisted, painted of a canary yellow, and towering above the fishing boats like a swan among ducklings.

'By St. Paul!' said the knight, 'our good merchant of Southampton hath not played us false, for methinks I can see our ship down yonder. He said that she would be of great size and of a yellow shade.'

‘By my hilt, yes!’ muttered Aylward; ‘she is yellow as a kite’s claw, and would carry as many men as there are pips in a pomegranate.’

‘It is as well,’ remarked Terlake; ‘for methinks, my fair lord, that we are not the only ones who are waiting a passage to Gascony. Mine eye catches at times a flash and sparkle from among yonder houses which assuredly never came from shipman’s jacket or the gaberdine of a burgher.’

‘I can also see it,’ said Alleyne, shading his eyes with his hand. ‘And I can see men-at-arms in yonder boats which ply betwixt the vessel and the shore. But methinks that we are very welcome here, for already they come forth to meet us.’

A tumultuous crowd of fishermen, citizens, and women had indeed swarmed out from the northern gate, approached them up the side of the moor, waving their hands and dancing with joy, as though a great fear had been rolled back from their minds. At their head rode a very large and solemn man with a long chin and a drooping lip. He wore a fur tippet round his neck and a heavy gold chain over it, with a medallion which dangled in front of him.

‘Welcome, most puissant and noble lord,’ he cried, doffing his bonnet to Black Simon. ‘I have heard of your lordship’s valiant deeds, and in sooth they might be expected from your lordship’s face and bearing. Is there any small matter in which I may oblige you?’

‘Since you ask me,’ said the man-at-arms, ‘I would take it kindly if you could spare a link or two of the chain which hangs round your neck.’

‘What, the corporation chain!’ cried the other in horror. ‘The ancient chain of the township of Lepe! This is but a sorry jest, Sir Nigel.’

‘What the plague did you ask me for then?’ said Simon. ‘But if it is Sir Nigel Loring with whom you would speak, that is he upon the black horse.’

The Mayor of Lepe gazed with amazement on the mild face and slender frame of the famous warrior.

‘Your pardon, my very gracious lord,’ he cried. ‘You see in me the mayor and chief magistrate of the ancient and powerful town of Lepe. I bid you very heartily welcome, and the more so as you are come at a moment when we are sore put to it for means of defence.’

‘Ha!’ cried Sir Nigel, pricking up his ears.

'Yes, my lord, for the town being very ancient and the walls as old as the town, it follows that they are very ancient too. But there is a certain villainous and bloodthirsty Norman pirate hight Tête-noire, who, with a Genoan called Tito Caracci, commonly known as Spade-beard, hath been a mighty scourge upon these coasts. Indeed, my lord, they are very cruel and black-hearted men, graceless and ruthless, and if they should come to the ancient and powerful town of Lepe, then——'

'Then good-bye to the ancient and powerful town of Lepe,' quoth Ford, whose lightness of tongue could at times rise above his awe of Sir Nigel.

The knight, however, was too much intent upon the matter in hand to give heed to the flippancy of his squire. 'Have you then cause,' he asked, 'to think that these men are about to venture an attempt upon you?'

'They have come in two great galleys,' answered the mayor, 'with two bank of oars on either side, and great store of engines of war and of men-at-arms. At Weymouth and at Portland they have murdered and ravished. Yesterday morning they were at Cowes, and we saw the smoke from the burning crofts. To-day they lie at their ease near Freshwater, and we fear much lest they come upon us and do us a mischief.'

'We cannot tarry,' said Sir Nigel, riding towards the town, with the mayor upon his left side; 'the Prince awaits us at Bordeaux, and we may not be behind the general muster. Yet I will promise you that on our way we shall find time to pass Freshwater and to prevail upon these rovers to leave you in peace.'

'We are much beholden to you!' cried the mayor. 'But I cannot see, my lord, how, without a war-ship, you may venture against these men. With your archers, however, you might well hold the town and do them great scath if they attempt to land.'

'There is a very proper cog out yonder,' said Sir Nigel; 'it would be a very strange thing if any ship were not a war-ship when it had such men as these upon her decks. Certes, we shall do as I say, and that no later than this very day.'

'My lord,' said a rough-haired, dark-faced man, who walked by the knight's other stirrup, with his head sloped to catch all that he was saying. 'By your leave, I have no doubt that you are skilled in land fighting and the marshalling of lances, but, by my soul! you will find it another thing upon the sea. I am the master-shipman of this yellow cog, and my name is Goodwin

Hawtayne. I have sailed since I was as high as this staff, and I have fought against these Normans and against the Genoese, as well as the Scotch, the Bretons, the Spanish, and the Moors. I tell you, sir, that my ship is over light and over frail for such work, and it will but end in our having our throats cut, or being sold as slaves to the Barbary heathen.'

'I also have experienced one or two gentle and honourable ventures upon the sea,' quoth Sir Nigel, 'and I am right blithe to have so fair a task before us. I think, good master-shipman, that you and I may win great honour in this matter, and I can see very readily that you are a brave and stout man.'

'I like it not,' said the other sturdily. 'In God's name, I like it not. And yet Goodwin Hawtayne is not the man to stand back when his fellows are for pressing forward. By my soul! be it sink or swim, I shall turn her beak into Freshwater Bay, and if good Master Witherton, of Southampton, like not my handling of his ship then he may find another master-shipman.'

They were close by the old north gate of the little town, and Alleyne, half turning in his saddle, looked back at the motley crowd who followed. The bowmen and men-at-arms had broken their ranks and were intermingled with the fishermen and citizens, whose laughing faces and hearty gestures bespoke the weight of care from which this welcome arrival had relieved them. Here and there among the moving throng of dark jerkins and of white surcoats were scattered dashes of scarlet or blue, the wimples or shawls of the women. Aylward, with a fishing lass on either arm, was vowing constancy alternately to her on the right and her on the left, while big John towered in the rear with a little chubby maiden enthroned upon his great shoulder, her soft white arm curled round his shining headpiece. So the throng moved on, until at the very gate it was brought to a stand by a wondrously fat man, who came darting forth from the town with rage in every feature of his rubicund face.

'How now, Sir Mayor?' he roared, in a voice like a bull. 'How now, Sir Mayor? How of the clams and the scallops?'

'By Our Lady, my sweet Sir Oliver,' cried the mayor, 'I have had so much to think of, with these wicked villains so close upon us, that it had quite gone out of my head.'

'Words, words!' shouted the other furiously. 'Am I to be put off with words? I say to you again, how of the clams and scallops?'

'My fair sir, you flutter me,' cried the mayor. 'I am a

peaceful trader, and I am not wont to be so shouted at upon so small a matter.'

'Small!' shrieked the other. 'Small! Clams and scallops! Ask me to your table to partake of the dainty of the town, and when I come a barren welcome and a bare board! Where is my spear-bearer?'

'Nay, Sir Oliver, Sir Oliver!' cried Sir Nigel, laughing. 'Let your anger be appeased, since instead of this dish you come upon an old friend and comrade.'

'By St. Martin of Tours!' shouted the fat knight, his wrath all changed in an instant to joy, 'if it is not my dear little game rooster of the Garonne. Ah, my sweet coz, I am right glad to see you. What days we have seen together!'

'Aye, by my faith,' cried Sir Nigel, with sparkling eyes, 'we have seen some valiant men, and we have shown our pennons in some noble skirmishes. By St. Paul! we have had great joys in France.'

'And sorrows also,' quoth the other. 'I have some sad memories of the land. Can you recall that which befell us at Libourne?'

'Nay, I cannot call to mind that we ever so much as drew sword at the place.'

'Man, man,' cried Sir Oliver, 'your mind still runs on nought but blades and bassinets. Hast no space in thy frame for the softer joys? Ah, even now I can scarce speak of it unmoved. So noble a pie, such tender pigeons, and sugar in the gravy instead of salt! You were by my side that day, as were Sir Claude Latour and the Lord of Pommers.'

'I remember it,' said Sir Nigel, laughing, 'and how you harried the cook down the street, and spoke of setting fire to the inn. By St. Paul! most worthy mayor, my old friend is a perilous man, and I rede you that you compose your difference with him on such terms as you may.'

'The clams and scallops shall be ready within the hour,' the mayor answered. 'I had asked Sir Oliver Buttethorn to do my humble board the honour to partake at it of the dainty upon which we take some little pride, but in sooth this alarm of pirates hath cast such a shadow on my wits that I am like one distrait. But I trust, Sir Nigel, that you will also partake of none-meat with me?'

'I have overmuch to do,' Sir Nigel answered, 'for we must be

aboard, horse and man, as early as we may. How many do you muster, Sir Oliver?’

‘Three and forty. The forty are drunk, and the three are but indifferent sober. I have them all safe upon the ship.’

‘They had best find their wits again, for I shall have work for every man of them ere the sun set. It is my intention, if it seems good to you, to try a venture against these Norman and Genoese rovers.’

‘They carry caviare and certain very noble spices from the Levant aboard of ships from Genoa,’ quoth Sir Oliver. ‘We may come to great profit through the business. I pray you, master-shipman, that when you go on board you pour a helmetful of seawater over any of my rogues whom you may see there.’

Leaving the lusty knight and the Mayor of Lepe, Sir Nigel led the Company straight down to the water’s edge, where long lines of flat lighters swiftly bore them to their vessel. Horse after horse was slung by main force up from the barges, and after kicking and plunging in empty air was dropped into the deep waist of the yellow cog, where rows of stalls stood ready for their safe keeping. Englishmen in those days were skilled and prompt in such matters, for it was not so long before that Edward had embarked as many as fifty thousand men in the port of Orwell, with their horses and their baggage, all in the space of four-and-twenty hours. So urgent was Sir Nigel on the shore, and so prompt was Goodwin Hawtayne on the cog, that Sir Oliver Buttethorn had scarce swallowed his last scallop ere the peal of trumpet and clang of nakir announced that all was ready and the anchor drawn. In the last boat which left the shore the two commanders sat together in the sheets, a strange contrast to one another, while under the feet of the rowers was a litter of huge stones which Sir Nigel had ordered to be carried to the cog. These once aboard, the ship set her broad mainsail, purple in colour, with a golden St. Christopher bearing Christ upon his shoulder in the centre of it. The breeze blew, the sail bellied, overheeled the portly vessel, and away she plunged through the smooth blue rollers, amid the clang of the minstrels on her poop and the shouting of the black crowd who fringed the yellow beach. To the left lay the green Island of Wight, with its long low curving hills peeping over each other’s shoulders to the sky-line; to the right the wooded Hampshire coast as far as eye could reach; above a steel-blue heaven, with a wintry sun

shimmering down upon them, and enough of frost to set the breath a-smoking.

'By St. Paul!' said Sir Nigel gaily, as he stood upon the poop and looked on either side of him, 'it is a land which is very well worth fighting for, and it were pity to go to France for what may be had at home. Did you not spy a crooked man upon the beach?'

'Nay, I spied nothing,' grumbled Sir Oliver, 'for I was hurried down with a clam stuck in my gizzard and an untasted goblet of Cyprus on the board behind me.'

'I saw him, my fair lord,' said Terlake, 'an old man with one shoulder higher than the other.'

'Tis a sign of good fortune,' quoth Sir Nigel. 'Our path was also crossed by a woman and by a priest, so all should be well with us. What say you, Edricson?'

'I cannot tell, my fair lord. The Romans of old were a very wise people, yet, certes, they placed their faith in such matters. So, too, did the Greeks, and divers other ancient peoples who were famed for their learning. Yet of the moderns there are many who scoff at all omens.'

'There can be no manner of doubt about it,' said Sir Oliver Buttethorn. 'I can well remember that in Navarre one day it thundered on the left out of a cloudless sky. We knew that ill would come of it, nor had we long to wait. Only thirteen days after, a haunch of prime venison was carried from my very tent door by the wolves, and on the same day two flasks of old vernage turned sour and muddy.'

'You may bring my harness from below,' said Sir Nigel to his squires, 'and also, I pray you, bring up Sir Oliver's, and we shall don it here. Ye may then see to your own gear; for this day you will, I hope, make a very honourable entrance into the field of chivalry, and prove yourselves to be very worthy and valiant squires. And now, Sir Oliver, as to our dispositions: would it please you that I should order them or will you?'

'You, my cockerel, you. By Our Lady! I am no chicken, but I cannot claim to know as much of war as the squire of Sir Walter Manny. Settle the matter to your own liking.'

'You shall fly your pennon upon the fore part, then, and I upon the poop. For foreguard I shall give you your own forty men, with two score archers. Two score men, with my own men-at-arms and squires, will serve as a poop-guard. Ten archers,

with thirty shipmen, under the master, may hold the waist while ten lie aloft with stones and arbalests. How like you that?’

‘Good, by my faith, good! But here comes my harness, and I must to work, for I cannot slip into it as I was wont when first I set my face to the wars.’

Meanwhile there had been bustle and preparation in all parts of the great vessel. The archers stood in groups about the decks, new-stringing their bows, and testing that they were firm at the nocks. Among them moved Aylward and other of the older soldiers, with a few whispered words of precept here and of warning there.

‘Stand to it, my hearts of gold,’ said the old bowman as he passed from knot to knot. ‘By my hilt! we are in luck this journey. Bear in mind the old saying of the Company.’

‘What is that, Aylward?’ cried several, leaning on their bows and laughing at him.

‘’Tis the master-bowyer’s rede: “Every bow well bent. Every shaft well sent. Every stave well nocked. Every string well locked.” There, with that jingle in his head, a bracer on his left hand, a shooting glove on his right, and a farthing’s-worth of wax in his girdle, what more doth a bowman need?’

‘It would not be amiss,’ said Hordle John, ‘if under his girdle he had four farthings’-worth of wine.’

‘Work first, wine afterwards, mon camarade. But it is time that we took our order, for methinks that between the Needle rocks and the Alum cliffs yonder I can catch a glimpse of the topmasts of the galleys. Hewett, Cook, Johnson, Cunningham, your men are of the poop-guard. Thornbury, Walters, Hackett, Baddlesmere, you are with Sir Oliver on the forecastle. Simon, you bide with your lord’s banner; but ten men must go forward.’

Quietly and promptly the men took their places, lying flat upon their faces on the deck, for such was Sir Nigel’s order. Near the prow was planted Sir Oliver’s spear, with his arms—a boar’s head gules upon a field of gold. Close by the stern stood Black Simon with the pennon of the house of Loring. In the waist gathered the Southampton mariners, hairy and burly men, with their jerkins thrown off, their waists braced tight, swords, mallets, and pole-axes in their hands. Their leader, Goodwin Hawtayne, stood upon the poop and talked with Sir Nigel, casting his eye up sometimes at the swelling sail, and then glancing back at the two seamen who held the tiller.

'Pass the word,' said Sir Nigel, 'that no man shall stand to arms or draw his bow-string until my trumpeter shall sound. It would be well that we should seem to be a merchant-ship from Southampton and appear to flee from them.'

'We shall see them anon,' said the master-shipman. 'Ha! said I not so? There they lie, the water-snakes, in Freshwater Bay; and mark the reek of smoke from yonder point, where they have been at their devil's work. See how their shallops pull from the land! They have seen us and called their men aboard. Now they draw upon the anchor. See them like ants upon the forecastle! They stoop and heave like handy shipmen. But, my fair lord, these are no niefs. I doubt but we have taken in hand more than we can do. Each of these ships is a galeasse, and of the largest and swiftest make.'

'I would I had your eyes,' said Sir Nigel, blinking at the pirate galleys. 'They seem very gallant ships, and I trust that we shall have much pleasance from our meeting with them. It would be well to pass the word that we should neither give nor take quarter this day. Have you perchance a priest or friar aboard this ship, Master Hawtayne?'

'No, my fair lord.'

'Well, well, it is no great matter for my Company, for they were all houseled and shriven ere we left Twynham Castle; and Father Christopher of the Priory gave me his word that they were as fit to march to heaven as to Gascony. But my mind misdoubts me as to these Winchester men who have come with Sir Oliver, for they appear to be a very ungodly crew. Pass the word that the men kneel, and that the under-officers repeat to them the pater, the ave, and the credo.'

With a clank of arms, the rough archers and seamen took to their knees, with bent heads and crossed hands, listening to the hoarse mutter from the file-leaders. It was strange to mark the hush; so that the lapping of the water, the straining of the sail, and the creaking of the timbers grew louder of a sudden upon the ear. Many of the bowmen had drawn amulets and relics from their bosoms, while he who possessed some more than usually sanctified treasure, passed it down the line of his comrades, that all might kiss and reap the virtue.

The yellow cog had now shot out from the narrow waters of the Solent, and was plunging and rolling on the long heave of the open channel. The wind blew freshly from the east, with a very

keen edge to it; and the great sail bellied roundly out, laying the vessel over until the water hissed beneath her lee bulwarks. Broad and ungainly, she floundered from wave to wave, dipping her round bows deeply into the blue rollers, and sending the white flakes of foam in a spatter over her decks. On her larboard quarter lay the two dark galleys, which had already hoisted sail, and were shooting out from Freshwater Bay in swift pursuit, their double line of oars giving them a vantage which could not fail to bring them up with any vessel which trusted to sails alone. High and bluff the English cog; long, black and swift the pirate galleys, like two fierce lean wolves which have seen a lordly and unsuspecting stag walk past their forest lair.

‘Shall we turn, my fair lord, or shall we carry on?’ asked the master-shipman, looking behind him with anxious eyes.

‘Nay, we must carry on, and play the part of the helpless merchant.’

‘But your pennons? They will see that we have two knights with us.’

‘Yet it would not be to a knight’s honour or good name to lower his pennon. Let them be, and they will think that we are a wine-ship for Gascony, or that we bear the wool-bales of some mercer of the Staple. Ma foi, but they are very swift! They swoop upon us like two goshawks on a heron. Is there not some symbol or device upon their sails?’

‘That on the right,’ said Edricson, ‘appears to have the head of an Ethiop upon it.’

‘Tis the badge of Tête-noire, the Norman,’ cried a seaman-mariner. ‘I have seen it before, when he harried us at Winchelsea. He is a wondrous large and strong man, with no ruth for man, woman, or beast. They say that he hath the strength of six; and, certes, he hath the crimes of six upon his soul. See, now, to the poor souls who swing at either end of his yard-arm!’

At each end of the yard there did indeed hang the dark figure of a man, jolting and lurching with hideous jerkings of its limbs at every plunge and swoop of the galley.

‘By St. Paul!’ said Sir Nigel, ‘and by the help of St. George and Our Lady, it will be a very strange thing if our black-headed friend does not himself swing thence ere he be many hours older. But what is that upon the other galley?’

‘It is the red cross of Genoa. This Spade-beard is a very

noted captain, and it is his boast that there are no seamen and no archers in the world who can compare with those who serve the Doge Boccanegra.'

'That we shall prove,' said Goodwin Hawtayne; 'but it would be well, ere they close with us, to raise up the mantlets and pavises as a screen against their bolts.' He shouted a hoarse order, and his seamen worked swiftly and silently, heightening the bulwarks and strengthening them. The three ship's anchors were at Sir Nigel's command carried into the waist, and tied to the mast, with twenty feet of cable between, each under the care of four seamen. Eight others were stationed with leather water-bags to quench any fire-arrows which might come aboard, while others were sent up the mast, to lie along the yard and drop stones or shoot arrows as the occasion served.

'Let them be supplied with all that is heavy and weighty in the ship,' said Sir Nigel.

'Then we must send them up Sir Oliver Buttesthorn,' quoth Ford.

The knight looked at him with a face which struck the smile from his lips. 'No squire of mine,' he said, 'shall ever make jest of a belted knight. And yet,' he added, his eyes softening, 'I know that it is but a boy's mirth, with no sting in it. Yet I should ill do my part towards your father if I did not teach you to curb your tongue-play.'

'They will lay us aboard on either quarter, my lord,' cried the master. 'See how they stretch out from each other! The Norman hath a mangonel or a trabuch upon the forecastle. See, they bend to the levers! They are about to loose it.'

'Aylward,' cried the knight, 'pick your three trustiest archers, and see if you cannot do something to hinder their aim. Methinks they are within long arrow flight.'

'Seventeen score paces,' said the archer, running his eye backwards and forwards. 'By my ten finger-bones! it would be a strange thing if we could not notch a mark at that distance. Here, Watkin of Sowley, Arnold, Long Williams, let us show the rogues that they have English bowmen to deal with.'

The three archers named stood at the further end of the poop, balancing themselves with feet widely spread and bows drawn, until the heads of the cloth-yard arrows were level with the centre of the stave. 'You are the surer, Watkin,' said Aylward, standing by them with shaft upon string. 'Do you take the rogue with

the red coif. You two bring down the man with the head-piece, and I will hold myself ready if you miss. *Ma foi!* they are about to loose her. Shoot, *mes garçons*, or you will be too late.'

The throng of pirates had cleared away from the great wooden catapult, leaving two of their number to discharge it. One in a scarlet cap bent over it, steadying the jagged rock which was balanced on the spoon-shaped end of the long wooden lever. The other held the loop of the rope which would release the catch and send the unwieldy missile hurtling through the air. So for an instant they stood, showing hard and clear against the white sail behind them. The next, redcap had fallen across the stone with an arrow between his ribs; and the other, struck in the leg and in the throat, was writhing and spluttering upon the ground. As he toppled backwards he had loosed the spring, and the huge beam of wood, swinging round with tremendous force, cast the corpse of his comrade so close to the English ship that its mangled and distorted limbs grazed their very stern. As to the stone, it glanced off obliquely and fell midway between the vessels. A roar of cheering and of laughter broke from the rough archers and seamen at the sight, answered by a yell of rage from their pursuers.

'Lie low, *mes enfants*,' cried Aylward, motioning with his left hand. They will learn wisdom. They are bringing forward shield and mantlet. We shall have some pebbles about our ears ere long.'

CHAPTER XVI.

HOW THE YELLOW COG FOUGHT THE TWO ROVER GALLEYS.

THE three vessels had been sweeping swiftly westwards, the cog still well to the front, although the galleys were slowly drawing in upon either quarter. To the left was a hard sky-line unbroken by a sail. The island already lay like a cloud behind them, while right in front was St. Alban's Head, with Portland looming mistily in the farthest distance. Alleyne stood by the tiller, looking backwards, the fresh wind full in his teeth, the crisp winter air tingling on his face and blowing his yellow curls from under his bassinet. His cheeks were flushed and his eyes shining, for the blood of a hundred fighting Saxon ancestors was beginning to stir in his veins.

'What was that?' he asked, as a hissing, sharp-drawn voice seemed to whisper in his ear. The steersman smiled, and pointed with his foot to where a short heavy cross-bow quarrel stuck quivering in the boards. At the same instant the man stumbled forward upon his knee, and lay lifeless upon the deck, a blood-stained feather jutting out from his back. As Alleyne stooped to raise him, the air seemed to be alive with the sharp zip-zip of the bolts, and he could hear them pattering on the deck like apples at a tree-shaking.

'Raise two more mantlets by the poop lanthorn,' said Sir Nigel quietly.

'And another man to the tiller,' cried the master-shipman.

'Keep them in play, Aylward, with ten of your men,' the knight continued. 'And let ten of Sir Oliver's bowmen do as much for the Genoese. I have no mind as yet to show them how much they have to fear from us.'

Ten picked shots under Aylward stood in line across the broad deck, and it was a lesson to the young squires who had seen nothing of war to note how orderly and how cool were these old soldiers, how quick the command, and how prompt the carrying out, ten moving like one. Their comrades crouched beneath the bulwarks, with many a rough jest and many a scrap of criticism or advice. 'Higher, Wat, higher!' 'Put thy body into it, Will!' 'Forget not the wind, Hal!' So ran the muttered chorus, while high above it rose the sharp twanging of the strings, the hiss of the shafts, and the short 'Draw your arrow! Nick your arrow! Shoot wholly together!' from the master-bowman.

And now both mangonels were at work from the galleys, but so covered and protected that, save at the moment of discharge, no glimpse could be caught of them. A huge brown rock from the Genoese sang over their heads, and plunged sullenly into the slope of a wave. Another from the Norman whizzed into the waist, broke the back of a horse, and crashed its way through the side of the vessel. Two others, flying together, tore a great gap in the St. Christopher upon the sail, and brushed three of Sir Oliver's men-at-arms from the forecastle. The master-shipman looked at the knight with a troubled face.

'They keep their distance from us,' said he. 'Our archery is over good, and they will not close. What defence can we make against the stones?'

'I think I may trick them,' the knight answered cheerfully,

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and passed his order to the archers. Instantly five of them threw up their hands and fell prostrate upon the deck. One had already been slain by a bolt, so that there were but four upon their feet.

'That should give them heart,' said Sir Nigel, eyeing the galleys, which crept along on either side with a slow measured swing of their great oars, the water swirling and foaming under their sharp stems.

'They still hold aloof,' cried Hawtayne.

'Then down with two more,' shouted their leader. 'That will do. Ma foi! but they come to our lure like chicks to the fowler. To your arms, men! The pennon behind me, and the squires round the pennon. Stand fast with the anchors in the waist, and be ready for a cast. Now blow out the trumpets, and may God's benison be with the honest men!'

As he spoke a roar of voices and a roll of drums came from either galley, and the water was lashed into spray by the hurried beat of a hundred oars. Down they swooped, one on the right, one on the left, the sides and shrouds black with men and bristling with weapons. In heavy clusters they hung upon the forecastle all ready for a spring—faces white, faces brown, faces yellow, and faces black, fair Norsemen, swarthy Italians, fierce rovers from the Levant, and fiery Moors from the Barbary States, of all hues and countries, and marked solely by the common stamp of a wild-beast ferocity. Rasping up on either side, with oars trailing to save them from snapping, they poured in a living torrent with horrid yell and shrill whoop upon the defenceless merchantman.

But wilder yet was the cry, and shriller still the scream, when there rose up from the shadow of those silent bulwarks the long lines of the English bowmen, and the arrows whizzed in a deadly sleet among the unprepared masses upon the pirate decks. From the higher sides of the cog the bowmen could shoot straight down, at a range which was so short as to enable a cloth-yard shaft to pierce through mail-coats or to transfix a shield, though it were an inch thick of toughened wood. One moment Alleyne saw the galley's poop crowded with rushing figures, waving arms, exultant faces; the next it was a blood-smeared shambles, with bodies piled three deep upon each other, the living cowering behind the dead to shelter themselves from that sudden storm-blast of death. On either side the seamen whom Sir Nigel had chosen for the purpose had cast their anchors over the side of the galleys, so that the

three vessels, locked in an iron grip, lurched heavily forward upon the swell.

And now set in a fell and fierce fight, one of a thousand of which no chronicler has spoken and no poet sung. Through all the centuries and over all those southern waters nameless men have fought in nameless places, their sole monument a protected coast and an unravaged country-side.

Fore and aft the archers had cleared the galleys' decks, but from either side the rovers had poured down into the waist, where the seamen and bowmen were pushed back and so mingled with their foes that it was impossible for their comrades above to draw string to help them. It was a wild chaos where axe and sword rose and fell, while Englishman, Norman, and Italian staggered and reeled on a deck which was cumbered with bodies and slippery with blood. The clang of blows, the cries of the stricken, the short deep shout of the islanders, and the fierce whoops of the rovers, rose together in a deafening tumult, while the breath of the panting men went up in the wintry air like the smoke from a furnace. The giant Tête-noire, towering above his fellows and clad from head to foot in plate of proof, led on his boarders, waving a huge mace in the air, with which he struck to the deck every man who opposed him. On the other side, Spade-beard, a dwarf in height, but of great breadth of shoulder and length of arm, had cut a road almost to the mast, with three score Genoese men-at-arms close at his heels. Between these two formidable assailants the seamen were being slowly wedged more closely together, until they stood back to back under the mast with the rovers raging upon every side of them.

But help was close at hand. Sir Oliver Buttethorn with his men-at-arms had swarmed down from the forecastle, while Sir Nigel, with his three squires, Black Simon, Aylward, Hordle John, and a score more, threw themselves from the poop and hurled themselves into the thickest of the fight. Alleyne, as in duty bound, kept his eyes fixed ever on his lord and pressed forward close at his heels. Often had he heard of Sir Nigel's prowess and skill with all knightly weapons, but all the tales that had reached his ears fell far short of the real quickness and coolness of the man. It was as if the devil was in him, for he sprang here and sprang there, now thrusting and now cutting, catching blows on his shield, turning them with his blade, stooping under the swing of an axe, springing over the sweep of a sword, so swift and so

erratic that the man who braced himself for a blow at him might find him six paces off ere he could bring it down. Three pirates had fallen before him, and he had wounded Spade-beard in the neck, when the Norman giant sprang at him from the side with a slashing blow from his deadly mace. Sir Nigel stooped to avoid it, and at the same instant turned a thrust from the Genceise swordsman, but, his foot slipping in a pool of blood, he fell heavily to the ground. Alleyne sprang in front of the Norman, but his sword was shattered and he himself beaten to the ground by a second blow from the ponderous weapon. Ere the pirate chief could repeat it, however, John's iron grip fell upon his wrist, and he found that for once he was in the hands of a stronger man than himself. Fiercely he strove to disengage his weapon, but Hordle John bent his arm slowly back until, with a sharp crack, like a breaking stave, it turned limp in his grasp, and the mace dropped from the nerveless fingers. In vain he tried to pluck it up with the other hand. Back and back still his foeman bent him, until, with a roar of pain and of fury, the giant clanged his full length upon the boards, while the glimmer of a knife before the bars of his helmet warned him that short would be his shift if he moved.

Cowed and disheartened by the loss of their leader, the Normans had given back and were now streaming over the bulwarks on to their own galley, dropping a dozen at a time on to her deck. But the anchor still held them in its crooked claw, and Sir Oliver with fifty men was hard upon their heels. Now, too, the archers had room to draw their bows once more, and great stones from the yard of the cog came thundering and crashing among the flying rovers. Here and there they rushed with wild screams and curses, diving under the sail, crouching behind booms, huddling into corners like rabbits when the ferrets are upon them, as helpless and as hopeless. They were stern days, and if the honest soldier, too poor for a ransom, had no prospect of mercy upon the battlefield, what ruth was there for sea robbers, the enemies of human kind, taken in the very deed, with proofs of their crimes still swinging upon their yard-arm.

But the fight had taken a new and a strange turn upon the other side. Spade-beard and his men had given slowly back, hard pressed by Sir Nigel, Aylward, Black Simon, and the poop-guard. Foot by foot the Italian had retreated, his armour running blood at every joint, his shield split, his crest shorn, his voice fallen

away to a mere gasping and croaking. Yet he faced his foemen with dauntless courage, dashing in, springing back, sure-footed, steady-handed, with a point which seemed to menace three at once. Beaten back on to the deck of his own vessel, and closely followed by a dozen Englishmen, he disengaged himself from them, ran swiftly down the deck, sprang back into the cog once more, cut the rope which held the anchor, and was back in an instant among his crossbow-men. At the same time the Genoese sailors thrust with their oars against the side of the cog, and a rapidly widening rift appeared between the two vessels.

'By St. George!' cried Ford, 'we are cut off from Sir Nigel.'

'He is lost,' gasped Terlake. 'Come, let us spring for it.' The two youths jumped with all their strength to reach the departing galley. Ford's feet reached the edge of the bulwarks, and his hand clutching a rope he swung himself on board. Terlake fell short, crashed in among the oars, and bounded off into the sea. Alleyne, staggering to the side, was about to hurl himself after him, but Hordle John dragged him back by the girdle.

'You can scarce stand, lad, far less jump,' said he. 'See how the blood drips from your bassinet.'

'My place is by the flag,' cried Alleyne, vainly struggling to break from the other's hold.

'Bide here, man. You would need wings ere you could reach Sir Nigel's side.'

The vessels were indeed so far apart now that the Genoese could use the full sweep of their oars, and draw away rapidly from the cog.

'My God, but it is a noble fight!' shouted big John, clapping his hands. 'They have cleared the poop, and they spring into the waist. Well struck, my lord! Well struck, Aylward! See to Black Simon, how he storms among the shipmen! But this Spade-beard is a gallant warrior. He rallies his men upon the forecastle. He hath slain an archer. Ha! my lord is upon him. Look to it, Alleyne! See to the whirl and glitter of it!'

'By heaven, Sir Nigel is down!' cried the squire.

'Up!' roared John. 'It was but a feint. He bears him back. He drives him to the side. Ah, by Our Lady, his sword is through him! They cry for mercy. Down goes the red cross, and up springs Simon with the scarlet roses!'

The death of the Genoese leader did indeed bring the resistance to an end. Amid a thunder of cheering from cog and from

galleys the forked pennon fluttered upon the forecastle, and the galley, sweeping round, came slowly back, as the slaves who rowed it learned the wishes of their new masters.

The two knights had come aboard the cog, and the grapplings having been thrown off, the three vessels now moved abreast. Through all the storm and rush of the fight Alleyne had been aware of the voice of Goodwin Hawtayne, the master-shipman, with his constant 'Hale the bowline! Vere the sheet!' and strange it was to him to see how swiftly the blood-stained sailors turned from the strife to the ropes and back. Now the cog's head was turned Francewards, and the shipman walked the deck, a peaceful master-mariner once more.'

'There is sad scath done to the cog, Sir Nigel,' said he. 'Here is a hole in the side two ells across, the sail split through the centre, and the wood as bare as a friar's poll. In good sooth, I know not what I shall say to Master Witherton when I see the Itchen once more.'

'By St. Paul! it would be a very sorry thing if we suffered you to be the worse for this day's work,' said Sir Nigel. 'You shall take these galleys back with you, and Master Witherton may sell them. Then from the monies he shall take as much as may make good the damage, and the rest he shall keep until our home-coming, when every man shall have his share. An image of silver fifteen inches high I have vowed to the Virgin, to be placed in her chapel within the Priory, for that she was pleased to allow me to come upon this Spade-beard, who seemed to me from what I have seen of him to be a very sprightly and valiant gentleman. But how fares it with you, Edricson?'

'It is nothing, my fair lord,' said Alleyne, who had now loosened his bassinet, which was cracked across by the Norman's blow. Even as he spoke, however, his head swirled round, and he fell to the deck with the blood gushing from his nose and mouth.

'He will come to anon,' said the knight, stooping over him and passing his fingers through his hair. 'I have lost one very valiant and gentle squire this day. I can ill afford to lose another. How many men have fallen?'

'I have pricked off the tally,' said Aylward, who had come aboard with his lord. 'There are seven of the Winchester men, eleven seamen, your squire, young Master Terlake, and nine archers.'

'And of the others?'

'They are all dead—save only the Norman knight who stands behind you. What would you that we should do with him?'

'He must hang on his own yard,' said Sir Nigel. 'It was my vow and must be done.'

The pirate leader had stood by the bulwarks, a cord round his arms, and two stout archers on either side. At Sir Nigel's words he started violently, and his swarthy features blanched to a livid grey.

'How, Sir Knight?' he cried in broken English. 'Que dites-vous? To hang, la mort du chien! To hang!'

'It is my vow,' said Sir Nigel shortly. 'From what I hear, you thought little enough of hanging others.'

'Peasants, base roturiers,' cried the other. 'It is their fitting death. Mais Le Seigneur d'Andelys, avec le sang des rois dans ses veines! C'est incroyable!'

Sir Nigel turned upon his heel, while two seamen cast a noose over the pirate's neck. At the touch of the cord he snapped the bonds which bound him, dashed one of the archers to the deck, and seizing the other round the waist sprang with him into the sea.

'By my hilt, he is gone!' cried Aylward, rushing to the side. 'They have sunk together like a stone.'

'I am right glad of it,' answered Sir Nigel; 'for though it was against my vow to loose him, I deem that he has carried himself like a very gentle and débonnaire cavalier.'

CHAPTER XVII.

HOW THE YELLOW COG CROSSED THE BAR OF GIRONDE.

For two days the yellow cog ran swiftly before a north-easterly wind, and on the dawn of the third the high land of Ushant lay like a mist upon the shimmering sky-line. There came a plump of rain towards mid-day and the breeze died down, but it freshened again before nightfall, and Goodwin Hawtayne veered his sheet and held her head for the south. Next morning they had passed Belle Isle, and ran through the midst of a fleet of transports returning from Guienne. Sir Nigel Loring and Sir Oliver Buttethorn at once hung their shields over the side, and displayed their pennons as was the custom, noting with the keenest interest the answering symbols which told the names of the cavaliers who

had been constrained by ill health or wounds to leave the prince at so critical a time.

That evening a great dun-coloured cloud banked up in the west, and an anxious man was Goodwin Hawtayne, for a third part of his crew had been slain and half of the remainder were aboard the galleys, so that, with an injured ship, he was little fit to meet such a storm as sweeps over those waters. All night it blew in short fitful puffs, heeling the great cog over until the water curled over her lee bulwarks. As the wind still freshened the yard was lowered halfway down the mast in the morning. Alleyne, wretchedly ill and weak, with his head still ringing from the blow which he had received, crawled up upon deck. Water-swept and aslant, it was preferable to the noisome rat-haunted dungeons which served as cabins. There, clinging to the stout halliards of the sheet, he gazed with amazement at the long lines of black waves, each with its curling ridge of foam, racing in endless succession from out the inexhaustible west. A huge sombre cloud, flecked with livid blotches, stretched over the whole seaward sky-line, with long ragged streamers whirled out in front of it. Far behind them the two galleys laboured heavily, now sinking between the rollers until their yards were level with the waves, and again shooting up with a reeling scooping motion until every spar and rope stood out hard against the sky. On the left the low-lying land stretched in a dim haze, rising here and there into a darker blur which marked the higher capes and headlands. The land of France! Alleyne's eyes shone as he gazed upon it. The land of France!—the very words sounded as the call of a bugle in the ears of the youth of England. The land where their fathers had bled, the home of chivalry and of knightly deeds, the country of gallant men, of courtly women, of princely buildings, of the wise, the polished and the sainted. There it lay, so still and grey beneath the drifting wrack—the home of things noble and of things shameful—the theatre where a new name might be made or an old one marred. From his bosom to his lips came the crumpled veil, and he breathed a vow that if valour and goodwill could raise him to his lady's side, then death alone should hold him back from her. His thoughts were still in the woods of Minstead and the old armoury of Twynham Castle, when the hoarse voice of the master-shipman brought them back once more to the Bay of Biscay.

‘By my troth, young sir,’ he said, ‘you are as long in the

face as the devil at a christening, and I cannot marvel at it, for I have sailed these waters since I was as high as this whinyard, and yet I never saw more sure promise of an evil night.'

'Nay, I had other things upon my mind,' the squire answered.

'And so has every man,' cried Hawtayne in an injured voice. 'Let the shipman see to it. It is the master-shipman's affair. Put it all upon good Master Hawtayne! Never had I so much care since first I blew trumpet and showed cartel at the west gate of Southampton.'

'What is amiss then?' asked Alleyne, for the man's words were as gusty as the weather.

'Amiss, quotha? Here am I with but half my mariners, and a hole in the ship where that twenty-devil stone struck us big enough to fit the fat widow of Northam through. It is well enough on this tack, but I would have you tell me what I am to do on the other. We are like to have salt water upon us until we be found pickled like the herrings in an Easterling's barrels.'

'What says Sir Nigel to it?'

'He is below pricking out the coat-armour of his mother's uncle. "Pester me not with such small matters!" was all that I could get from him. Then there is Sir Oliver. "Fry them in oil with a dressing of Gascony," quoth he, and then swore at me because I had not been the cook. "Walawa," thought I, "mad master, sober man—so away forward to the archers. Harrow and alas! but they were worse than the others."'

'Would they not help you then?'

'Nay, they sat tway and tway at a board, him that they call Aylward and the great red-headed man who snapped the Norman's arm-bone, and the black man from Norwich, and a score of others, rattling their dice in an archer's gauntlet for want of a box. "The ship can scarce last much longer, my masters," quoth I. "That is your business, old swine's-head," cried the black galliard. "Le diable t'emporte!" says Aylward. "A five, a four and the main," shouted the big man, with a voice like the flap of a sail. Hark to them now, young sir, and say if I speak not sooth.'

As he spoke, there sounded high above the shriek of the gale and the straining of the timbers a gust of oaths with a roar of deep-chested mirth from the gamblers in the forecabin.

'Can I be of avail?' asked Alleyne. 'Say the word and the thing is done, if two hands may do it.'

'Nay, nay, your head I can see is still totty, and i' faith little head would you have, had your bassinet not stood your friend. All that may be done is already carried out, for we have stuffed the gape with sails and corded it without and within. Yet when we hale our bowline and veer the sheet our lives will hang upon the breach remaining blocked. See how yonder headland looms upon us through the mist! We must tack within three arrow flights, or we may find a rock through our timbers. Now, St. Christopher be praised! here is Sir Nigel, with whom I may confer.'

'I prythee that you will pardon me,' said the knight, clutching his way along the bulwark. 'I would not show lack of courtesy toward a worthy man, but I was deep in a matter of some weight, concerning which, Alleyne, I should be glad of your rede. It touches the question of dimidiation or impalement in the coat of mine uncle, Sir John Leighton of Shropshire, who took unto wife the widow of Sir Henry Oglander of Nunwell. The case has been much debated by pursuivants and kings-of-arms. But how is it with you, master-shipman?'

'Ill enough, my fair lord. The cog must go about anon, and I know not how we may keep the water out of her.'

'Go call Sir Oliver!' said Sir Nigel, and presently the portly knight made his way all astraddle down the slippery deck.

'By my soul, master-shipman, this passes all patience!' he cried wrathfully. 'If this ship of yours must needs dance and skip like a clown at a kermesse, then I pray you that you will put me into one of these galeasses. I had but sat down to a flask of malvoisie and a mortress of brawn, as is my use about this hour, when there comes a cherking, and I find my wine over my legs and the flask in my lap, and then as I stoop to clip it there comes another cursed cherk, and there is a mortress of brawn stuck fast to the nape of my neck. At this moment I have two pages coursing after it from side to side, like hounds behind a leveret. Never did living pig gambol more lightly. But you have sent for me, Sir Nigel?'

'I would fain have your rede, Sir Oliver, for Master Hawtayne hath fears that when we veer there may come danger from the hole in our side.'

'Then do not veer,' quoth Sir Oliver hastily. 'And now, fair sir, I must hasten back to see how my rogues have fared with the brawn.'

‘Nay, but this will scarce suffice,’ cried the shipman. ‘If we do not vere we shall be upon the rocks within the hour.’

‘Then veer,’ said Sir Oliver. ‘There is my rede; and now, Sir Nigel, I must crave——’

At this instant, however, a startled shout rang out from two seamen upon the forecastle. ‘Rocks!’ they yelled, stabbing into the air with their forefingers, ‘rocks beneath our very bows!’ Through the belly of a great black wave, not one hundred paces to the front of them, there thrust forth a huge jagged mass of brown stone, which spouted spray as though it were some crouching monster, while a dull menacing boom and roar filled the air.

‘Yare! yare!’ screamed Goodwin Hawtayne, flinging himself upon the long pole which served as a tiller. ‘Cut the halliard! Haul her over! Lay her two courses to the wind!’

Over swung the great boom, and the cog trembled and quivered within five spear-lengths of the breakers.

‘She can scarce draw clear,’ cried Hawtayne, with his eyes from the sail to the seething line of foam. ‘May the holy Julian stand by us and the thrice-sainted Christopher!’

‘If there be such peril, Sir Oliver,’ quoth Sir Nigel, ‘it would be very knightly and fitting that we should show our pennons. I pray you, Edricson, that you will command my guidon-bearer to put forward my banner.’

‘And sound the trumpets!’ cried Sir Oliver. ‘In manus tuas, Domine! I am in the keeping of James of Compostella, to whose shrine I shall make pilgrimage, and in whose honour I vow that I will eat a carp each year upon his feast-day. Mon Dieu, but the waves roar! How is it with us now, master-shipman?’

‘We draw! We draw!’ cried Hawtayne, with his eyes still fixed upon the foam which hissed under the very bulge of the side. ‘Ah, Holy Mother, be with us now!’

As he spoke the cog rasped along the edge of the reef, and a long white curling sheet of wood was planed off from her side from waist to poop by a jutting horn of the rock. At the same instant she lay suddenly over, the sail drew full, and she plunged seawards amid the shoutings of the seamen and the archers.

‘The Virgin be praised!’ cried the shipman, wiping his brow. ‘For this shall bell swing and candle burn when I see Southampton Water once more. Cheerily, my hearts! Pull yarely on the bowline!’

‘By my soul! I would rather have a dry death,’ quoth Sir

Oliver. 'Though, Mort Dieu! I have eaten so many fish that it were but justice that the fish should eat me. Now I must back to the cabin, for I have matters there which crave my attention.'

'Nay, Sir Oliver, you had best bide with us, and still show your ensign,' Sir Nigel answered; 'for, if I understand the matter aright, we have but turned from one danger to the other.'

'Good Master Hawtayne,' cried the boatswain, rushing aft, 'the water comes in upon us apace. The waves have driven in the sail wherewith we strove to stop the hole.' As he spoke the seamen came swarming on to the poop and the forecastle to avoid the torrent which poured through the huge leak into the waist. High above the roar of the wind and the clash of the sea rose the shrill half-human cries of the horses, as they found the water rising rapidly around them.

'Stop it from without!' cried Hawtayne, seizing the end of the wet sail with which the gap had been plugged. 'Speedily, my hearts, or we are gone!' Swiftly they rove ropes to the corners, and then, rushing forward to the bows, they lowered them under the keel, and drew them tight in such a way that the sail should cover the outer face of the gap. The force of the rush of water was checked by this obstacle, but it still squirted plentifully from every side of it. At the sides the horses were above the belly, and in the centre a man from the poop could scarce touch the deck with a seven-foot spear. The cog lay lower in the water and the waves splashed freely over the weather bulwark.

'I fear that we can scarce bide upon this tack,' cried Hawtayne; 'and yet the other will drive us on the rocks.'

'Might we not haul down sail and wait for better times?' suggested Sir Nigel.

'Nay, we should drift upon the rocks. Thirty years have I been on the sea, and never yet in greater straits. Yet we are in the hands of the Saints.'

'Of whom,' cried Sir Oliver, 'I look more particularly to St. James of Compostella, who hath already befriended us this day, and on whose feast I hereby vow that I shall eat a second carp, if he will but interpose a second time.'

The wrack had thickened to seaward, and the coast was but a blurred line. Two vague shadows in the offing showed where the galeasses rolled and tossed upon the great Atlantic rollers. Hawtayne looked wistfully in their direction.

'If they would but lie closer we might find safety, even should

the cog founder. You will bear me out with good Master Witherton of Southampton that I have done all that a shipman might. It would be well that you should doff camail and greaves, Sir Nigel, for, by the black rood, it is like enough that we shall have to swim for it.'

'Nay,' said the little knight, 'it would be scarce fitting that a cavalier should throw off his harness for the fear of every puff of wind and puddle of water. I would rather that my Company should gather round me here on the poop, where we might abide together whatever God may be pleased to send. But, certes, Master Hawtayne, for all that my sight is none of the best, it is not the first time that I have seen that headland upon the left.'

The seaman shaded his eyes with his hand, and gazed earnestly through the haze and spray. Suddenly he threw up his arms, and shouted aloud in his joy.

'Tis the Point of La Tremblade!' he cried. 'I had not thought that we were as far as Oleron. The Gironde lies before us, and once over the bar, and under shelter of the Tour de Cordouan, all will be well with us. Vere again, my hearts, and bring her to try with the main course!'

The sail swung round once more, and the cog, battered and torn and well-nigh water-logged, staggered in for this haven of refuge. A bluff cape to the north and a long spit to the south, marked the mouth of the noble river, with a low-lying island of silted sand in the centre, all shrouded and curtained by the spume of the breakers. A line of broken water traced the dangerous bar, which in clear day and balmy weather has cracked the back of many a tall ship.

'There is a channel,' said Hawtayne, 'which was shown to me by the Prince's own pilot. Mark yonder tree upon the bank, and see the tower which rises behind it. If these two be held in a line, even as we hold them now, it may be done, though our ship draws two good ells more than when she put forth.'

'God speed you, Master Hawtayne!' cried Sir Oliver. 'Twice have we come scathless out of peril, and now for the third time I commend me to the blessed James of Compostella, to whom I vow——'

'Nay, nay, old friend,' whispered Sir Nigel. 'You are like to bring a judgment upon us with these vows, which no living man could accomplish. Have I not already heard you vow to eat two carp in one day, and now you would venture upon a third.'

'I pray you that you will order the Company to lie down,' cried Hawtayne, who had taken the tiller and was gazing ahead with a fixed eye. 'In three minutes we shall either be lost or in safety.'

Archers and seamen lay flat upon the deck, waiting in stolid silence for whatever fate might come. Hawtayne bent his weight upon the tiller, and crouched to see under the bellying sail. Sir Oliver and Sir Nigel stood erect with hands crossed in front of the poop. Down swooped the great cog into the narrow channel which was the portal to safety. On either bow roared the shallow bar. Right ahead one small lane of black swirling water marked the pilot's course. But true was the eye and firm the hand which guided. A dull scraping came from beneath, the vessel quivered and shook, at the waist, at the quarter, and behind sounded that grim roaring of the waters, and with a plunge the yellow cog was over the bar and speeding swiftly up the broad and tranquil estuary of the Gironde.

(To be continued.)

ON THE FRENCH-SWISS FRONTIER.

LES QUEUES—The Tails! A strange enough name, and one hardly suggestive of the pretty little group of houses, situated in rich meadow land on the edge of the fir-forests, that owns this fantastic title. Can four houses, placed at about fifteen yards from each other, separated by meadows and by the unending smooth highway, be called a group? And if they are not a group, what else can one call them? They belong to no other cluster of houses, for those near at hand, like those far away in the distance, bear each one a different name. Here we have Les Combes, there Le Chaux-Faux, now La Roche, now again Les Crozots, and so on *ad infinitum*; all groups, more or less large, of picturesque houses, rising out of greenest verdure and belted by the dark fir-forests. But Les Queues is, for its size, the most visited—perhaps we may even venture to call it the most fashionable, if a little nook so entirely dependent on nature for its charms can be associated with the giddy goddess Fashion; and therefore I will attempt to give my readers a short description of this corner of the world which has not yet—impossible as it seems—been visited by the English or American tourist.

Les Queues is near the frontier between the Canton de Neuchâtel and the French province of Franche-Comté. Twenty years ago, before the rectification of this frontier-line, then very irregular, was effected, Les Queues was on the extreme edge of the Swiss frontier; at the present day it lies about five minutes distant from France. At intervals, while walking about the country, one comes across grey stone *bornes*, or landmarks indicating the dividing line, and these are graven on one side with the Federal cross and on the other with the French fleur-de-lis. The undulating ranges of the Jura rise on all sides, and their distinguishing features are extensive and valuable fir-forests, broad pasture lands, yellow patches of wheat, and, farther down the sides of the mountains, in sheltered nooks and in the valleys, clusters of picturesque red or grey roofs, with sometimes a graceful church spire rising from amongst them, mark the spot where hamlets lie. To the right of Les Queues, at a distance of two miles, flows the Doubs, an important and beautiful river that serves in part as

a dividing line between France and Switzerland. The nearest town of importance is Locle, lying far below in the valley; it possesses 10,000 inhabitants, and is celebrated for its watch-making.

The inhabitants of Les Queues, who may be taken as a sample of the people living in the Jura range, are extremely thrifty, cheerful, healthy, and clean. They are inclined to regard strangers with suspicion for the reason that foreigners are rare, and those who do visit the country are not always very creditable specimens. I don't think it would be easy to impose upon them, but when any case of real suffering or want presents itself ungrudging help meets the poor fellow-creature who is in need; for this reason there is no misery in the district. These people have a keen sense of the ludicrous, and an honest contempt for all kinds of shams and snobbery which sometimes betrays them into roughness of speech as well as action. Class distinctions are slightly observed; everybody, even the poorest peasant, is addressed as *Monsieur* or *Madame*; a workman will often use the familiar *thou* in speaking to his *patron*, or employer, for in many instances they have been at school together. As a consequence of such republican habits, politeness of manner and the little refinements in use amongst larger communities are not much cultivated; indeed I fancy they are despised, even considered suspicious. There is no national costume worn: coarse cotton blouses are much used amongst the men, no matter what their employment may be; the elderly women sometimes wear a close-fitting crimped white cap of French origin. The long, rigorous cold and damp of the climate in these mountain regions is the reason why the people are rather addicted to drinking frequently, and in larger quantities than is good for them. The favourite beverages are a thin red wine and, alas! a very inferior kind of brandy extracted partly from potatoes, called vulgarly *la goutte*. *Boire la goutte*, which means imbibing a *petit verre*, or pennyworth, of this poison at all hours of the day or night, is a habit too often indulged in on the slightest provocation.

It is not surprising that at Les Queues, and generally in these tiny hamlets so near the French border, many French customs prevail, and that the predominating religion should be Roman Catholic. At ten minutes' walk from Les Queues one discovers amongst the surrounding trees the quaint little Roman Catholic church of La Chaux-Faux, the resort of the simple, devout

mountaineers for miles around. In the meadow land near the church is a large crucifix, serving as a landmark between France and Switzerland, and this is the favourite spot where the pretty processions that take place on important feast-days are held. The red frocks and tippets of the small chorister-boys surrounding M. le Curé; the white dresses and gay ribbons of the *Filles de Marie*, who carry proudly their small banners; the richly decked heavy candles with their gold ornaments—all stand out in a bright relief against the background of sloping vivid green meadow. The church itself is tastefully arranged with sweet-faced statues of the Virgin and Child, and many other ornaments appealing strongly to the emotional, imaginative side of human nature. M. le Curé, in his short white surplice trimmed with deep rich lace, and a grave, not to say sanctimonious expression on his young face, preaches a brief and practical homily to his attentive flock. After the sermon, while he and his attendant choristers are performing before the altar curious evolutions savouring slightly of the theatre—suddenly a woman's clear sweet voice fills the church—'Ave Maria, Mater Dei, ora pro nobis'—in slow plaintive accents. Not a sound is heard but the soft notes of the organ and the voice of the unseen singer, who might be an angel from heaven, descended in the growing twilight to hallow the simple worship. The effect is beautiful, and perhaps more efficient than many a sermon, for the woman's rich notes and the quaint grandeur of the Latin words go straight to the heart, bringing tears to the eyes—a result sermons do not always produce.

The chief employments of the people are watchmaking for the large watch factories of Locle, farming, and, in the summer, taking care of cows and making dairy produce. Cows are sent up to the mountains, *à l'alpage*, from the villages lying down in the valleys. They are put out to board from May to September, and from twenty to thirty francs is paid for each animal. Here they enjoy the cool air and the sweet grass that makes the milk very good. Milk, warm from the cow, forms part of the mountain cure for invalids. A cow is expected to yield from fifteen to twenty quarts of milk a day. The cows enjoy entire liberty even at night; they rove about the forest, where the grass is particularly fragrant with herbs, also along the sides of the wide, long roads, and their progress is only stopped by low limestone walls, the stones of which are piled one on the top of the other without

cement. To prevent the possibility of the cows being lost, a bell is attached by a strap to the neck of each animal. The bells vary according to the size of the beast, but they, as well as the strap, seem very heavy—and yet the cows are supposed to be very proud of their ornaments; these are often shaped like ordinary hand-bells, but some are narrow and flattened at the sides, also rather longer than is usual with bells. But, whatever their form, they certainly make very pretty music. One hears their tinkle, tinkle, in a variety of different tones, resounding from out of the forest depths, and from the grassy slopes; this is often the only sound brought by the still, crisp mountain air. Cows are not allowed into the fir-plantations, because they are very fond of nibbling off the sprouts of the young trees, which not only spoils their beauty, but also injures them for useful purposes.

Watchmaking is carried on to a great extent, though it is not so lucrative an employment as it used to be, for the reason that foreign apprentices, who came to perfect themselves in the trade, have now established a business elsewhere; consequently the demand for manufactures coming from the Jura mountains, which were once impossible to rival, has considerably declined. A good worker was able to make from twenty-five to thirty francs a day; even now a skilled hand can earn in a day from ten to fifteen francs. The numerous commercial houses of Locle give out special employment to their different hands, male and female—for young ladies add a nice little sum to their stock of pocket-money and future *dot*, or marriage portion, by this means—who take it to their homes, where they work at the many delicate branches of a watch's machinery—the case, the hands, the polishing of the whole, &c. In nearly all the rustic cottages, as, indeed, in the more imposing village apartments, one sees, arranged before a good-sized window, a wide plank, on which is placed a little wheel and many other dainty tools. Here the watchmaker pursues his daily labours, except on Sundays, from early morning until far into the night. From the fact of the work being carried on before a window, the French in derision nickname watchmaking *travailler sur la fenêtre*. As the watchmakers are incessantly exposed to keen draughts of icy-cold air that penetrate even through double windows and all kinds of woollen or felt protections, the huge, ugly iron or white-tiled stoves are lighted early and late in the year; sometimes they have to be kept alight all the year round, for no good work can be done with benumbed fingers. Watch-

makers like their delicate, clean, and useful work, which only demands good sight, moderate intelligence, and light, dexterous fingers to become a lucrative employment. The work is not, as might be imagined, injurious to the eyes; indeed the constant strain is said to strengthen the sight, but of this fact one cannot be sure. I have heard of an old man, eighty years of age, who continues to work, which proves that watchmaking is not injurious to the health.

Amongst this busy people, mostly occupied during the week at a sedentary trade, the Sunday is naturally the day for long walks and amusements of all kinds that are sometimes prolonged over to the Monday. As, of the four houses composing *Les Queues*, two are *café-restaurants*, in spite of its seclusion, on fine Sundays the little spot is gay with merry-makers. The favourite amusements are ninepins, open-air dances, and the consumption of a large, round, flat cake called, rather appropriately, *la sèche*, accompanied by beer, wine, and *la goutte*, which creature-comforts are laid out on long wooden tables, placed with their several benches on the green sward at the verge of the forest. For the juvenile portion of the assembly, rarely small in Switzerland, there are swings, see-saws, merry-go-rounds, and the beautiful fir-forests that yield to their eager fingers a plentiful harvest of wild strawberries, raspberries, whortleberries, nuts, mushrooms, and sweet-scented nose-gays of gaily tinted wild flowers.

The game of ninepins in use at *Les Queues* is most primitive. At about six yards from each other are placed two sheds with wooden floors—one protects the players from rain, the other shelters the heavy ninepins. Between the sheds there are two wide planks, sloping gently, and well wetted in order that the ball may slide easily to its goal. Sufficiently distant to be clear of the game, two young stems of fir-trees are fixed near together, and aslant, forming a kind of open tube, down which the balls are rolled back to the player by the man who arranges the pins after each throw. The balls are of wood and the size of a football; they are scooped out to the depth of two inches at the top under the circumference of the wood, forming a small arched handle. They are extremely clumsy, requiring to be swung backwards and forwards several times before the proper impetus is gained with which to slide them up the plank. The game must be most fatiguing; yet the continuous dull thud of the balls against the pins assures one that the amusement is being pursued with

untiring vigour during the whole day, for a stake seemingly inadequate compared with the amount of labour expended.

Open-air dancing is a great feature of these Sunday entertainments. In a field, on a raised wooden platform, is the bandstand, round which, in a boarded enclosure, the dancers disport themselves. The Terpsichorean delights may be procured at the moderate sum of one penny for every gentleman, the fair sex being gallantly exempted from all payment; even if two ladies dance together they are permitted to do so gratis. The music is good as far as the quality goes; but there is a certain amount of sameness about the selection, because a jigging polka is the popular dance. The dancing, wonderfully select considering the admittance fee, is amusing, likewise the dancers, who betray much earnestness in trying to maintain an easy yet dignified deportment—a result they achieve with moderate success.

The larger of the two *cafés* at Les Queues is also a *pension*, much frequented during the summer holidays by ladies from Locle who desire the benefits of pure air and simple nourishing food for themselves and their children. The *pension* is extremely cheap, clean—very rustic of course; but for a summer's change of air, when one's time is spent out of doors, there are few places where the delights of country life can be more thoroughly enjoyed than at this unpretentious little *pension* with its obliging proprietors.

The winter lasts from October to April; it is very severe. Snow falls to the depth of one mètre, and when there are drifts one sometimes hears of people being lost in the white wilderness. To obviate this danger, posts are fixed in the snow along the side of the highway in order to mark the roads; these latter are cleared by means of a triangular wooden machine, to which from six to eight horses are attached. After a severe frost, when the snow is hard and the sun shines brightly on the glistening white hills and on the fir-trees bearing gracefully their soft-looking, yet heavy burden, winter wears no gloomy appearance. Snow is hailed with pleasure, for both the land and its people are the better for it: its warm covering preserves the pastures from frost, and the dry crisp cold it brings is infinitely healthier than a rainy winter with the attendant evils of rheumatism and bronchitis. During the summer rain is frequent, but when fine weather comes it comes in earnest. One revels in the soft warm sunshine that inundates the wide landscape and brings out the many beautiful shades of green on hill, vale, and forest. Three fine days following each

other is a rare event—generally there are heavy showers or else a thunderstorm in between. But showers, heavy storms even, do not damp one's enjoyment of this pleasant land; they are so soon over, the sun shines so brightly afterwards, and, as the sloping limestone soil allows the rain to run off as it falls, there are no inconvenient puddles with mud. When, however, rain sets in for the day, things in general do not wear a cheerful aspect; the fir-forests look very gloomy; dark sullen clouds trail low down, enviously hiding their slender heads in a mantle of grey mist; the regular fall of the rain is intensely irritating; there is far too much monotony about the green hills whose very beauty is owing to this odious damp. Everything is wet; the patient cows under the trees look wearily about for absent sunbeams, and the lonely figure of the little shepherdess, sitting upright on the low stone wall under her big umbrella, is a living refutation of the idea that pastoral life consists only in sunshine and pretty Watteau frocks. September is considered here as the finest month of the year, and with reason—the weather is generally bright and, though cold, not too cold; I have enjoyed a whole fortnight of perfect sunshine in September.

The picturesque little houses at Les Queues are built entirely with reference to the cold: their foundations are of limestone; also the walls up to the level of the roof, about five feet from the ground, and these are whitewashed; the upper part of the walls is of dark wood. The roofs slope very abruptly so that the snow may slip off easily whenever a thaw sets in, otherwise they might be forced down by its accumulated weight; their eaves project far beyond the house-wall. The roofs are made either of red or small wooden tiles that become grey by exposure; where these latter are used, big stones must be placed on the roof at intervals to render it more secure. Wooden roofs are more expensive, less serviceable, but infinitely prettier than the more modern tiles. Unfortunately, many ancient picturesque usages are more costly and less practical than our useful, but ugly, modern inventions.

All the houses dotted about the country are built very much alike. The *grange*, or barn, used as hayloft and lumber-room, is at the back of the house. Here the quaint furniture, &c., belonging to generations past is stored; curious-shaped, cumbersome cupboards hustle sacks of old rags, which in turn are pressed close by agricultural implements, piles of fire-

wood and of *tourbe*, a kind of peat used also for fuel. Many pretty things are mixed up with the heavy old furniture ; in one distant corner I found a dainty little wooden cradle, used for the great-grandmother of the house and many another round, rosy, well-loved babe ; now, alas ! it is put away for ever. A part of the *grange* is raised much higher than the rest ; the hay is stored here, and very green it looks ; close by it, from a beam in the rafters, carefully enveloped in cotton covers, hang the Sunday frocks of *Mademoiselle Zéphirine*, a daughter of the house. The *grange* is also used for hanging out washing in wet weather, and for storing dirty clothes ; as these latter are washed but twice a year, it may be imagined how desirable a large and airy storeroom must be.

By the door at the side of the house one enters immediately into the large, dark, low-ceilinged kitchen, paved with irregular stone flags. In the centre of the ceiling there is an opening about two square yards wide, the base of the huge black wooden chimney, rising sometimes to a great height, and getting narrower by degrees, till at the top it is only a square half-yard wide. The only means of lighting the kitchen are by a little window near the pump at the door, and the chimney-hole gleaming far away at the apex of the enormous cavern ; this hole is opened or closed at pleasure by pulling a rope attached to an adjustable board nailed on the chimney-top. The large *foyer*, or hearth, where the wood fire blazes, is directly under the chimney, and at hand stands a big wooden block and chopper for preparing the fuel. Close by is a great stone oven for making bread and pastry ; twenty large flat loaves can be easily baked in its large recesses at the same time—a convenience, as in some families bread is only baked once a month. This home-made bread has a most agreeable taste, but, as it is heavy, a little of it goes a long way. The iron cooking-pots are slung over the fire by means of hooked chains fixed to a pole fastened to the chimney-wall about four feet from the ground ; a larger pole is fixed higher up in the chimney and across the opening ; on it two wooden planks, with pegs in them, are steadied against the chimney-wall at about a yard's distance from each other. When a pig is killed, the joints of pork and the sausages are placed on these pegged planks and left there all the winter, in order that the meat may be well cured by the plentiful smoke from the wood fire. Hams cured in this manner are said to be excellent. But though the chimneys are very large,

it must not be inferred that all the smoke issues at once from the open fireplace by its proper channel; the blackened kitchen ceiling, the dark-complexioned walls, and often, doubtless, the dirty faces of the inhabitants, attest that hams are not the only articles well smoked in these primitive dwellings.

The bedrooms are upstairs to the front of the house on the sunny side; as a rule they are cheerful, small, and very low-ceilinged rooms, wainscoted with wood and arranged to form parlour and bedroom in one. The custom of covering beds with heavy curtains used to be very general; nowadays it is dying out, though in the room I visited curtains were still in use. '*Ma fie!* they are no longer the fashion,' explained the obliging lady who showed me over her house; 'but, as they were my mother's, we leave them.' The bedroom walls are always gay with coloured engravings of the Virgin and saints, pretty little stands for holy water, family photos ranged in a straight line, curious illustrations of ancient legends, and occasionally a case full of little graven images and relics of all sorts. The bedrooms communicate with the kitchen by a very steep, narrow, dark wooden staircase. Sometimes one finds in a little back room, sacred to dust and rats, a loom used for making a coarse, warm carpet, much in favour, as its fabrication necessitates the employment of all the old rags obtainable.

What seems most remarkable about these cottages is the lowness of their ceilings and the quantity of wood used in their structure—two consequences of a rigorous climate. House insurance is compulsory.

Flowers are greatly cultivated by the mountaineers, who feel a tenderer regard for nature's sweet children than might perhaps be the case were they less difficult to rear. The window-sills are filled with bright geraniums and nasturtiums, standing out in gay relief against the dark wooden house-wall. With the September frosts the pretty plants disappear indoors for eight long months.

There is a great deal of smuggling carried on at the frontier-line. The articles smuggled from Switzerland to France are chiefly tobacco, sugar, and coffee; from France to Switzerland the trade is in cattle, gunpowder, and household goods. The smugglers usually pass the frontier by a dangerous passage across the river Doubs and the rocks in its vicinity called the Saut du Doubs. The perils of this romantically beautiful passage are increased by the darkness, the fear of custom-house officers, and by heavy

packages of contraband goods which impede the free use of the limbs. Each man is armed with an alpenstock and a pistol; he carries his bundle fastened to his back by a heavy strap, which can be detached and the bundle rolled down the adjacent precipice at the first signal of danger and pursuit. Naturally the men who are willing to face such risks both to life and pocket—for the loss of a bundle of goods is a serious affair—are much admired and aided by the peasants of both countries. They, as well as the smugglers, are convinced not only of the harmlessness of smuggling, but that they are actually conferring a boon on society by obtaining for it articles which can be sold at a much cheaper rate than if they paid duty fees. But goods are often conveyed across the frontier, in small quantities it is true, in a much more public manner. Waggoners, dogs, travellers, railway officials, and even the custom-house officers themselves, are all more or less engaged in smuggling. Late at night one sometimes hears the roll of heavy waggons passing through Les Queues. Wondering what could keep the hard-working peasants up to an hour so advanced beyond their usual bedtime, I once inquired the reason. 'Ce sont les contrabandiers,' was the reply, which brought with it a fine flavour of wild romance, suggesting midnight raids, hand-to-hand struggles in the depths of dark forests, and the groans of dying men. Needless to say, nobody volunteered to stop the course of the waggons. When smugglers are caught they are punished by severe imprisonment at Pontarlier and by heavy fines, but as yet I understand that defaulters are not inconveniently crowded in their French prisons.

The passion for smuggling possessed by people who, living near the frontier, profit largely by its advantages, gives rise sometimes to most amusing incidents. Ladies, ever alive to the delights of a bargain, are inveterate smugglers. I heard recently that a party of them, with their children, hired a waggonette ostensibly for the pleasure of a drive from Locle, Switzerland, to Morteaux, a little French village; in reality they were all intent on buying crockery, &c., to be brought back concealed about their persons. Arrived at Morteaux, they proceeded to make numerous purchases, which straightway disappeared by some means into the mysterious depths of the buyers' clothing. A sugar-basin was fitted into a bonnet, a saucepan served for a bustle, and one ingenious dame outdid her compeers by adjusting a set of plates in such wise as to imitate, very successfully, the form of a lady in an interesting

condition! Imagine the laughter, the broad jokes, the crowding together in the waggonette on their return, the fun of hoodwinking Messieurs les Douaniers, and the excitement caused by a possibility of detection. I am glad to say that in this instance 'fortune favoured the brave.' Such devotion to the family interests deserved success.

It is said that the best of everything should be kept for the last, and on this principle I have devoted the concluding paragraphs of my article to the fir-forests of Les Queues. These beautiful forests surround one at all points. In the distant valleys they appear as dark blue-black patches dividing the stretches of verdure; nearer at hand their growth is more extensive, and at last they crown every spot, peak after peak is hidden by the splendid trees, straight as darts, the pride of the Canton de Neuchâtel. But to enjoy the forests to perfection one must not be content to view them from afar—one must penetrate into their depths until on all sides nothing can be seen but the tall symmetrical trunks of the forest giants rising like sentinels thick and close around one, their heavy branches darkening the midday air, and their faultlessly shaped heads standing out against the clear blue sky. Then, while reposing on a soft, enticing carpet of moss and grass, scented sweetly by numerous aromatic herbs, bedecked by delicate harebells and a profusion of pretty wild strawberries, gleaming so red against the light green leaves that one cannot resist the desire to pick and eat plentifully of such charming food—then, with no more disturbing sounds around than the distant, never-ceasing tinkle of the cow-bells, the occasional fall of a pine-cone, and the sleep-inducing hum of busy insects, one is beguiled into believing that perfect happiness and peace have not yet deserted our tired world. The eye is delighted by long vistas of trees whose grey lichen-covered trunks the sun lightens up here and there with bright patches of silver; and the sun finds out exquisite golden-brown tints in the abundant moss that covers everything within its reach; the low stone walls dividing the forest into sections, the long roots of the trees, the grey limestone boulders, and the great stumps of ancient forest-kings that have been sent long since to the shipbuilding works of Marseilles—all are alike made lovely by this magnificent mantle. Amongst the firs there are many beech-trees whose lighter foliage waves, vivid green, in the pleasant breeze that is not strong enough to move the great trees. Suddenly another sound dis-

turbs the stillness, and one rises in haste to search for the rushing mountain stream that appears to be hurrying by behind the trees at no considerable distance. But the same sound, heard again and more distinctly, convinces one that there is no stream; it is only the wind moaning through the forest and bending the huge trees with its might. Here and there a trunk is marked with a deep lightning-scar; the forests attract storms, and in this way they serve as a protection to the surrounding hamlets. But the poor cows that take refuge under their branches do not find the same security; after a thunderstorm the unfortunate beasts are sometimes found struck dead at the foot of the trees.

The forest contains many useful plants used by good wives for their simple *tisanes* and lotions for sprains, bruises, &c. The odour of the firs which impregnates the air is very salubrious, especially for persons with delicate chests and lungs. The young fir-sprouts, also the aromatic forest-herbs, are used medicinally. When picked, boiling water is poured over them and they are left for some hours to infuse. This infusion is used as a strengthening bath for weakly, anæmic children. One finds many different kinds of mushrooms growing in the damp moss and grass, some good, some bad; I noted a kind called *la chevrette*, bearing a curious resemblance to a growth of white coral. In the moss one sees growing a strange kind of orchid, bell-shaped and waxen-coloured. Another feature of the forest is the number of peculiar anthills, made by a large species of black ant. These hills are formed of the dried fir-foliage, called *dard*, which falls to the ground in quantities, and is collected in great heaps by the industrious little creatures. While observing them at their unceasing labours, one is filled with admiration mingled with awe for the wonderful thrift Dame Nature shows in turning everything to account. In the meadows there are numerous little grassy hillocks formed by a small red ant that stings, whereas its friend of the forest is perfectly harmless. Some people even pretend that a quantity of these black ants, boiled in a strengthening infusion, is an efficacious remedy for rheumatism.

Moonlight nights at Les Queues are very beautiful. Coming as I did from Italy, where the moon is most exquisite, I supposed that there would be little to admire in the moonlight of this northern country. I was agreeably surprised; the beauty of one night especially remains in my memory. The moon, not yet full, was shining through a light veil of soft fleecy clouds, stretched

far away on all sides, that, instead of hiding her charms, rather revealed them by diffusing her rays in a silver radiance flooding earth and sky. Against moonlit clouds on all sides the gracefully pointed outlines of the fir-tops were sharply cut out. Over the gently undulating pasture-land the hazy light fell in mild loveliness. But in the forest itself all was dark, except where a green glade or mossy bank, not too closely protected by the guardian trees, offered free passage to a bright ray. A pity there was no Endymion asleep on the thyme-scented, harebell-adorned couch to be kissed and covered by the argentine light. I waited, but none appeared, and I heard no music beyond the sweet-toned, but very earthly, cow-bells. And so at last I had to go to bed with the regret that in our times there should be no Endymions.

A HOMILY.

THE humblest and frailest grassy blade
That ever the passing breezes swayed
Is of Beauty's palace a green arcade.

Akin to the uttermost stars that burn,
A story the wisest may never learn,
Is the tiny pebble thy footsteps spurn.

In each human heart potential dwell,
Hid from the world and itself as well,
Heights of heaven, abysms of hell.

The core of the earth is fiery young!
No matter what may be said or sung
With a weary brain and a wailing tongue.

Soul! self-pent in a narrow plot,
Longing each morn for some fair lot,
Some bounteous grace which thou hast not,

Dull thou must be not to understand,
And blind thou art not to see at hand
Thy dreams by reality far outspanned;

For wonder lies at thy very door,
And magic thy fireside sits before,
And marvels through every window pour.

Woven the wings of the swift hours be
Of splendour and terror and mystery:
One thing is needful—the eyes to see!

THE KING'S LUCK.

DIVINE RIGHT is on its last legs. The Will of the People, that modern abstraction, has dealt it a hard blow. Before the new-fangled sovereignty of Demos, or his nominee, all other 'kings by the grace of God' are nowadays having a bad time of it. The success of the republic, in America and elsewhere, has served considerably to weaken the time-honoured idea that royalty, as such, is a divine institution. If whatever is, is right—if a living dog is better than a dead lion—then clearly a president *de facto*, with a court at the Élysée, however shabby, is at least as good as a king *de jure*, with nothing but a lodging in *partibus infidelium*. And when, as in modern France, nobody exactly knows who is the real Simon Pure—the true king of the white flag of the Bourbons; while emperors and Boulangers and other pretenders darken counsel in the background for the searcher after truth—why, the plain man is disposed to conclude in his rough-and-ready fashion that Providence after all is not quite so royalist as our ancestors thought it. Its vote seems to be cast impartially for a George Washington almost as often as for a George the Third; and it favours a Napoleon as against a Louis Dixhuit, so far as the casual observer can make out, in strict accordance with the relative size of their respective battalions.

In its own time, however, Divine Right played a far larger rôle in the world than even its seventeenth-century advocates ever dreamed of. We know now that the doctrine of the Stuarts and their legal or clerical advisers was but a miserable relic of that divinity which doth hedge a king among earlier and much less sophisticated races. Not only were kings once kings by divine right, but they were once indeed themselves divine, and in yet simpler stages they were actually incarnate gods. The power to touch for king's evil which still descended to the last of the Stuarts was but a final remnant of the miraculous powers over nature generally, possessed by the god-like kings of more native races or of earlier times. There are nations still among whom the king is a god: there were days when kings were equally gods among all humanity.

The beginnings of this claim to Divine Right go back ages beyond the 'Zeus-nurtured kings' of Homer, and spring almost

undoubtedly from the well-nigh universal custom of ancestor-worship. Modern anthropology has made it quite clear to us that all over the world, whatever great gods may be worshipped as well, the smaller gods of every tribe and every family are its own dead ancestors. The very same feeling of affection and regard which prompts Christian men and women in our own time to lay flowers and wreaths on the graves of their loved ones, and to mark their resting-place with sculptured stones or costly crosses, prompted primitive man to offer at the tomb his simple gifts of food and drink, and to perpetuate the memory of his lost friends by erecting over their bodies a rough-hewn boulder, or a rude stone monument. The ghosts of the dead were ever present by his side: to them he prayed for aid when he went forth to war; at their shrines he made presents of the spoil when he returned from battle with the corn and wine of his enemies. Every nation has such household gods; and in an immense majority of instances they can be shown almost beyond a doubt to be nothing more or less than the spirits of their ancestors.

But while each family thus sacrifices to its particular predecessors—the house-father offering up gifts on behalf of the household to his own father and remoter progenitors—the tribe as a whole sacrifices to the ghosts of its deceased kings; and the living king, their descendant and representative, becomes accordingly the natural priest of this common tribal worship. Among many low races, almost the only gods recognised are such dead chiefs: and the existing chief, as their son and heir, presents to them the prayers and gifts of the people. Hence it naturally follows that these living chiefs themselves are descendants of the gods, and as such essentially partake of the divine nature. That they lie, and steal, and fight, and get drunk, and otherwise misconduct themselves does not militate, of course, against their divine claims: for even the gods and goddesses of Hellas, we may recollect, were by no means blameless on points of moral order. The ideal of godhead in such cases, I need hardly say, is a very low one; but the ghosts or gods, such as they are, are at least conceived as capable of bestowing all temporal blessings or the contrary on their worshippers. Not only do they grant strength on the war-path and luck in the chase, but they also grant rain or sunshine, thunder or lightning, plenty or scarcity; they are answerable alike for the fruits of the earth, and for drought or famine, for favourable weather, or for earthquake, flood, pestilence, and tempest. And what the gods can do, that their descendant, the king, can do

likewise. The king is thus a living god: the god is thus a dead or ghostly king.

Up to a much higher level of culture than one would at first imagine, this identification of kings and gods has been common in history. In civilised Egypt, for example, the earliest kings were a dynasty of gods, and the later kings were their sons and successors. There is even some reason for believing with Mr. Loftie that Osiris and Horus, themselves great mythical shades, were originally nothing more or less than local princes of Abydos, in Upper Egypt, and that the earliest historical dynasties of the Nile valley were their lineal descendants. At any rate, the king at Thebes or Memphis was treated as in fact 'a present god:' he is spoken of as the lord of heaven, lord of earth, the sun, the living Horus, the maker of mortals: his image on the monuments is sculptured of divine size and stature: and he is represented as receiving the symbols both of kingship and of divinity from the gods his ancestors who ruled in their own day over the self-same holy realm of Egypt. Temples were built to him, and priests endowed to carry on his worship: and so persistent were these endowments, that after thousands of years we find mention of sacrifices offered to the spirits of Cheops and Cephrenes, the antique kings of the early empire who built the two great pyramids.

Just in the same way, in native Peru, the Incas were the descendants of the gods, and were therefore naturally gods themselves: they were the children of the sun, and 'could do no wrong'—a peculiarity shared with them by the sovereigns of Great Britain to the present moment. The Mexican kings were no less divine, and were worshipped during their lifetime with prayer and sacrifice. When Alexander of Macedon claimed to be the son of Jupiter Ammon, he meant what he said: when the Roman senate proclaimed the godhead of the Divus Cæsar, every Roman understood it as a genuine apotheosis. 'Namque erit ille mihi semper deus,' says Virgil of the young Augustus. In our own day, the Mikado of Japan is a surviving example of such an incarnate god. He is an embodiment of the sun-goddess, the deity who rules over gods and men alike: and he is considered so great that for one month in the year all the other gods of heaven flock to his palace and pay him courtesy.

It is only by throwing ourselves in imagination into such a frame of mind as this that we can understand the common title of 'the God Euergetes,' or 'the Goddess Cleopatra,' habitually bestowed upon the Greek kings and queens of Egypt. It is only in the

same way, too, that we can dimly figure to ourselves the ideas of those distant provincials who saw in such creatures as Vitellius or Domitian a divine incarnation, a *Divus Cæsar*. For even in our own day, a temple still stands at Benares to Warren Hastings: and a sect of natives in the Punjab worship a deity whom they call Nikkal Sen, but whom the Army List in his own day knew only as the redoubted General Nicholson. Nay, if we want the exact parallel to the altars erected to Tiberius and Nero in Syria or Britain, we shall find it in a new cult which has arisen in Orissa, and whose devotees worship our sovereign lady Victoria, queen and empress, as their principal deity.

For some time past, since Tylor and Spencer made clear to us the working of the savage or barbarous mind in such strange developments of faith and practice, this essential identity of god and king among early races has been generally recognised. But Mr. Frazer, of Cambridge, has quite recently pointed out in his interesting work on the Arician priesthood some quaint and curious, though personally disagreeable, side results of the godhead thus officiously thrust by his subjects upon the unhappy monarch. Uneasy lies the head that wears a crown in more than one of these primitive communities. For if the king is a god, then obviously he is a dispenser of good or bad times: he is answerable for the state of the weather and the crops; he is responsible for all and sundry misfortunes that afflict the tribe collectively, as well as for plague, pestilence, famine, and all other ills that individual flesh is heir to. Now it's very convenient to have your god, so to speak, on tap, and to be able to remonstrate with him from time to time as occasion arises. Hence, if things don't turn out well, many savages wait upon their king or chief 'to know the reason why;' and if the king fails to satisfy them of the excellence of his intentions, or the wisdom of his rule over the elements of nature, they proceed forthwith to kill him. As the Arcadians used to beat the images of their gods when they had ill-luck in hunting, so these guileless children of nature turn and rend their incarnate divinity whenever he shows himself unwilling or unable to produce the sort of weather they consider themselves entitled to. And even so the British farmer, it is rumoured, to this very day, turns out an administration because the rainfall has failed, or the foot-and-mouth disease has played havoc among his unfortunate South-downs.

Under such circumstances, it may readily be imagined, the post of king is by no means all beer and skittles. No wonder

'sleep leaves the kingly couch,' as the divine bard puts it, when the kingly couch so widely differs from a bed of roses. In West Africa, says Mr. Frazer, whenever drought occurs, and prayers and offerings presented to the chief have failed to produce the desired rain, the unsophisticated negro has resort to compulsion. He binds his chief with ropes, hales him away to the graves of his forefathers, and peremptorily orders him to obtain from them without delay refreshing showers. The Banjars, again, regard their king as a great weather-god. So long as things run on smoothly they load him with presents of grain and cattle: but when drought or rainfall spoils the crops, they beat him and insult him till the weather changes. In the self-same spirit, the ancient Scythians—good, practical souls—when food was scarce, imprisoned their king till things came right again. The use of a god is clearly to benefit his worshippers. No benefits, no worship. So, too, the people of Loango, when the surf on the coast spoils the fishing, accuse their king-god of 'a bad heart,' and depose him for his inefficient management of the forces of nature. The Burgundians got rid of their king if the crops failed: the ancient Swedes went further, like our Puritan ancestors, and actually killed their legitimate monarch if storm or pestilence attested his incapacity.

Sometimes, we may well believe, the king finds the place too hard for him. On Savage Island, in the South Pacific, a line of chieftains once reigned supreme over a dusky people. But as these chiefs were of divine nature, and were supposed to make the crops grow, their subjects got angry with them when the food-supplies fell short, and killed them off rapidly, in a spell of bad seasons, one after another. At last so many chiefs were killed in succession that nobody cared to accept the office. The title went begging, and the monarchy ceased for want of offers. Much the same sort of thing may happen some day in Russia, if the Nihilists have their way. After a few more Czars have been blown up, the Imperial Grand Dukes may not unnaturally decline to make themselves the scapegoats of the autocratic system. The crown may then be put up for public competition, the Russian people not binding itself, however, to accept the lowest or any other tender.

But if the god-king's life is sometimes a nuisance to himself owing to the anger and disgust of his subjects at his management of the universe, he has no less to fear, on the other hand, from their excessive reverence and respect in certain quarters. Instead of being harshly treated, he has sometimes to complain of being killed with kindness. Existence is made a burden to him by the extreme

solicitude and regard of his worshippers for his sacred person. He is taken so much care of that life itself ceases to be of interest to him.

Have you ever observed the queen-bee in a glass hive, attended by her constant bodyguard of workers, and narrowly watched, whichever way she moves, by a jealous band of insect courtiers? If you have, you will remember how the bees of the royal suite stand round their sovereign in a ring, with their heads all pointed towards her, and their eyes closely fixed on her every motion. Whenever she takes a single step in advance, the bees in front fall back, with their heads still turned towards the royal presence: the bees to right and left move sideways like crabs: the bees behind follow her up closely. No human monarch of civilised lands is ever so carefully and jealously guarded: to none is such assiduous deference paid, on none is such constant and willing care lavished.

Now why is this? Simply because a queen-bee is the one mother of the hive, the sole hope of the race, the visible embodiment of the collective future. It isn't loyalty in any modern human sense that makes her attendants watch over her so carefully: it's a just regard for the interests of the community, which she sums up in herself as their common rallying-point and general parent. If the queen dies, the hive and the race in so far die with her: everything is upset: affairs are at a standstill: the bees languish and grow listless for want of a proper outlet for their instinctive faculties. Hence, their great object in life is to secure that nothing untoward should happen to the sacred person of the queen. They take infinite pains that she shall not escape from the hive, and that within it nothing dangerous or doubtful shall ever come near her. Her life is far too precious to her kind for her to be allowed to play tricks with it at her own free-will in the fields or meadows. Who knows but a field mouse might eat her unawares, or a shower play havoc with her royal constitution? In effect, therefore, she is practically a prisoner in her own home, mewed up by guards like a sultana in her quarters, and prevented from enjoying the freedom and exercise which fall to the lot of the meanest among her worker subjects.

Well, what the queen-bee really *is* to the hive, that and more the savage imagines his king-god to be to the tribe or nation. The divine chief sums up in himself the luck and the life of the entire people. As he can sway and govern the winds, the rain, the fruits of the earth, the sunshine, his well-being becomes to them a matter of prime importance. Nay more, by a curious

association common to all human minds, a sort of sympathetic influence is supposed to extend from him to all and sundry the members of his tribe. Our own Teutonic name for his office—the name of king—means etymologically, not as Carlyle loved to feign, the canning man, but the kin-ing, the child of the race, the son of the divine ancestors, the man who tots up and condenses in himself the whole diffuse tribal personality. *L'état, c'est lui.* He is his people. When a mediæval monarch spoke of himself as 'France,' or 'Naples,' he was but carrying on into a newer and wider type of life the ideas implicitly yet directly derived from his barbaric ancestors.

But if the god-king is thus really so important—if he can procure for his people rain or sunshine, good harvests or bad, wealth or poverty—if he sums up mysteriously in his own person all the fortunes of his tribe, then surely, the prudent savage argues to himself, we must be very careful that nothing untoward in any way should happen to his sacred health or his divine body. He must be guarded from hocussing like a Derby favourite: he must be preserved from the faintest sign of breakage like the Luck of Eden-hall. The result of this feeling is the familiar and widespread system of *taboo*, by which the sacred person of the king is girt round with restrictions of the minutest kind, often ridiculous, and always irksome, but all tending to preserve him from real or imaginary misfortunes of every sort.

As the queen-bee mustn't go out of the hive, so in many cases the god-king mustn't go a step outside his own palace. Within, he is safe from attack, or from accident, or from the evil eye: without, there's no knowing what dangers on earth may surround and encompass him. Thus in old Japan, the Mikado lived largely secluded from all the world, and protected by a minute and tedious ceremonial. So, too, the kings of Persia were shut up in their palaces, and hardly any of their subjects were ever permitted to see them. The kings of Egypt were worshipped as gods; but the divinity that hedged them round must have been far more annoying than pleasing to its unhappy possessors; for, as Diodorus tells us, 'everything was arranged for them by law, not only their royal duties, but also the details of their daily life. The hours of day and night were measured out, at which the king had to do, not what he liked, but what custom prescribed for him.' His food and drink were all as accurately ordained as Sancho Panza's on the island of Barataria; for might not a passing fit of indigestion upset for ever the realm of Nile, or a headache produced by too much

wine overnight beget far-reaching effects through all the Upper and Lower Kingdoms?

The king, in short, as Mr. Andrew Lang has graphically put it, was 'tabooed an inch deep,' and dared never transgress the limits of these divine restrictions. Some of the taboos referred to his food and drink, which were always light and simple, in order that the sacred body might remain sound and wholesome. But more still were magical in their nature, and had reference rather to the vague misfortunes that might fall upon the king from the wicked wiles of black art or witchcraft. Dread of the evil eye, ever strong among savages, is one of the chief reasons for secluding the king: and as strangers are particularly liable to exercise this malign influence, barbaric majesty is seldom allowed even to show its divine face before the face of foreigners. This is one of the many reasons, indeed, for the aversion felt to strangers in barbarous countries: they may bring with them some evil power which will unfavourably affect the luck of the tribesmen. In many Polynesian islands now, as in the Crimea of old, strangers who come ashore are immediately massacred, out of sheer funk. The ancient Egyptians were almost equally inhospitable: and the Chinese by no means love the 'red-haired devils' who seek to charm them with a mixed diet of opium and moral pocket-handkerchiefs. Even in our own Britain, the unsophisticated islanders of St. Kilda believe to this day that a new-comer from the outer world always brings some mysterious disease along with him: and the aborigines of the Black Country preserve the same primitive idea in the well-known ceremony of spying a stranger and 'eaving 'arf a brick at 'im.

This horror of being seen, and especially of being seen abroad, above all by strangers, is very widespread. From the day of his coronation—so Mr. Frazer tells us—the King of Loango is not permitted to go outside his palace. His royal brother of Ibo may not step from his house unless a human sacrifice is offered in his stead to propitiate destiny. The kings of Æthiopia on the Upper Nile were treated as gods, but were never allowed for all that to leave their own precincts. If the kings of Sheba appeared in the streets, their scandalised subjects immediately stoned them. To this day, the sovereigns of Corea, who receive divine honours, are shut up hermetically in their own apartments, and never communicate directly with their people. In other cases, different precautions are taken to prevent the king being seen. At Mandalay, palings six feet high were erected in all the streets where the great

Theebaw of the moment was likely to pass ; and whenever he went abroad in his capital, all the people had to stay behind these wooden barriers. The Sultan of Wadai speaks from behind a curtain : the Sultan of Darfur wraps his face in a piece of white muslin. A last relic of these curious isolating customs may be seen in the taboo which prevents many Eastern monarchs from ever quitting their own dominions. Several Indian princes may not leave India ; and it was with great difficulty that the Persians reconciled themselves to the idea of their Shah visiting Europe.

One of the oddest taboos, however, to Western minds at least, is that which forbids the king to have his hair cut, or to pare his nails, or otherwise to get rid of any useless part of his sacred body. The Mikado, poor god-descended wretch, was never allowed to cut his hair, or even to wash himself. The Frankish kings wore their locks about their shoulders, because it would have been wicked to touch them with the shears : and endless other instances could easily be quoted. The reason is in part, no doubt, that the whole body is divine, and therefore to be respected ; but even more, in all probability, because of the evil use that an enemy might make of such hair or nail-parings, if they got into his power. For it is a well-known principle of magic, in all times and places, that if you want to make spells against anyone, you ought, if possible, to possess yourself of something that once belonged to him, or, above all, of an actual relic or part of his body. This you can then use as a fetish or charm for the destruction of the person to whom it originally belonged. For so intimate is the sympathy between all the parts of one and the same body, that if the hair is burnt, or hacked about or destroyed, the person himself will be destroyed also ; if it withers in the ground, he will wither away piecemeal ; and if a magician plays any ugly tricks with it, the original owner will be correspondingly affected. This makes it a very delicate question to decide what should be done with the king's hair or nails, in case you were to cut them. On the whole, the wisdom of our early ancestors concluded, it's safer to keep them on his own head and hands than to run any risks from the malice of magicians. So the edict of society went forth accordingly : the royal locks and the royal fingers are tabooed for ever.

Perhaps, however, the most interesting point about all these early notions as to the divinity of the king is the subtle way in which, under infinite disguises, they have trickled down to our own time, and still pervade the current thought of Europe. For the

sacro-sanctity of the royal person only died away by slow degrees ; and many modern forms of loyalty or of respect for rank must be traced back ultimately to such heathen beginnings. They are ideas, in other words, that could never have arisen spontaneously, but can only exist as mitigated forms of earlier and far more barbaric superstitions. One can trace a gradual modification in this respect from the earliest times to our own day : but there is no sudden break, no general emancipation. The godship of the king declined slowly into the divine nature of the king, and then into his divine right, which is now finally evaporating before our very eyes in the mitigated and attenuated form of mere 'legitimacy.' The shadowy claim of the Duke of Cumberland to the kingdom of Hanover, of the last of the Italian Bourbons to the kingdom of Naples, and of the late Duke of Parma to the British crown, though anachronisms in our own age, lead us back directly to the god-kings of the old Teutonic stock, and the divine origin of the house of Woden.

For even after the Christianisation of the North, every English prince in the petty Anglo-Saxon monarchies traced his descent without fail to the divine ancestor Woden, as every Norse chieftain did to his Scandinavian equivalent, Odin. No longer admitted as a god, the great Teutonic ancestral deity still retained his place in every royal pedigree, and was accepted on all hands as the prime progenitor of princely families. Some of the genealogies even combine all possible requirements by first tracing back the king to Woden, and then supplying Woden himself with a long line of still earlier ancestors who are finally affiliated on the patriarch Noah. In Christian times, to be sure, a Christian colour was given to the divinity of the king by ascribing it rather to the act of coronation and the sacred oil of consecration than to any inherent divine nature. But even so, it was felt that the monarch must be of royal stock, and that the blood of confessedly heathen gods must trickle in his veins. 'The kingly kin' and 'the kin of Woden' were interchangeable phrases : and though holy ampullas and papal blessings counted for much with priests and priestly-minded laymen, there can be little doubt that with the nobles and the people at large it was the divine descent, not the priestly assent, that really weighed most in their reverence for royalty.

Among the many little superstitions which marked this popular attitude towards kingship, none is more interesting than that of the Stones of Destiny, on which it was necessary that kings should be crowned in many countries. In Ireland they

were frequent, and the most famous of them stood on the great royal tumulus of Tara: it was, in short, in all probability, the tombstone of the ancient chiefs of that part of Ireland. When the true king put his foot on it, the stone cried aloud three times: in other words, the divine ancestors from their graves recognised their son, and proclaimed him as such before the assembled people. The royal stone of the West Saxon race stood in the Surrey town which we still call Kingston: it is preserved there to this day in an open space, with an inscription bearing the names of the early English princes who sat to be crowned upon it. But the most famous of all these tribal stones is that of the Scotch monarchy, which formerly stood near the palace at Scone, but was brought by Edward I. to England, and now forms part of the coronation chair in Westminster Abbey. The old legend that Scots will reign wherever that stone is found means, of course, that the stone will allow none but the true heir or representative of the ancient kings to take his seat as sovereign upon it. Its place in Westminster Abbey, and its use in the Christian ceremony of coronation, show the usual quaint mixture of heathendom with the younger faith to which archæological inquirers are now so well accustomed.

The belief in the quasi-divine nature of kings dies out very slowly. It is Christianised and transformed, but not destroyed. The King of Obbo, who calls his people together in times of drought, and demands goats and corn of them if they want him to mend the weather—'No goats, no rain: that's our compact,' says his majesty—the King of Obbo has his final counterpart in the Stuart belief that bad seasons fell upon the people as a punishment for their participation in the sin of rebellion. The magical power of early chieftains over demons and diseases survived late in modern England in the practice of touching for king's evil. The sacred person of the sovereign remains sacred to this day before the English law. And if the Egyptians and Peruvians held their Pharaohs or their Incas to be incarnate deities, it was in the age of Voltaire himself that Bossuet dared distinctly to say, 'Kings are gods, and share in a degree the divine independence.' These are not mere scraps and tags of courtly adulation, as one is at first tempted nowadays to believe: the closer one looks at them, the more clearly does one see that they are actually survivals of thought and feeling from the days when the king was in reality the living god, and the god was in reality the dead king.

THE LABOUR CANDIDATE.

THEY chose John Hammer for three chief reasons :—

First, because he was so honest and single-minded. They knew as well as they could know anything, that he would never play them false. They could strum upon his candour to their heart's content. They also had the wit to perceive that, if ever they disagreed with him, or he disagreed with them, this excellent quality of his would provide offhand the material for a dispute which should end in his resignation or supersession.

Next, he was poor. That was almost as convenient as his extreme honesty. Unquestionably, if their man was not poor, he might by-and-by kick over the traces, and enjoy himself until the next Dissolution without the least reference to the men who, to all public intents and purposes, had created him. John was, in fact, so poor, that if they had not provided him with an allowance of so much a week, with travelling expenses, second class, and a dress-suit, as extras, he would not have been able to pay his dinner-bill for a single week, let alone support his wife and family. He was as thoroughly dependent upon them as a marine pier upon the piles which support it.

In the third place, John Hammer was an out-and-out Red, with political views which quite accorded with their own. He had been educated at the National School of Wallsend until he was ten, when he entered the world of real life as a pit-bank boy. From that time forward, until he became foreman of a gang of colliers, he had continued to mature. And now he could sneer at the Queen and the Royal Family, bring down his right fist with a resounding whack into the hollow of his left hand when he mentioned the Civil or the Pension List, become frenzied in his contrast of the earnings of a pitman with the inherited income of a duke, and signify in very audible and expressive language his conviction that a time was coming when—: all this he could do as well as the most conscientious demagogue that Wallsend had ever had the good luck to listen to.

It was clear, therefore, that John Hammer was their man.

'What wilt say, my woman, when thy John tacks M.P. to his name?' quoth the candidate to his wife, a week before the

polling-day. 'An' it'll coom to pass, my lass, tek my word for it!'

'I shanna know what to say, John. It'll be so strange-loike; an' oime na sure it'll be good for ayther o' the pair of us.'

'Thee bist a fule!' said John; and in his displeasure he swung the latch of his little cottage at four-and-six a week, and strode into the high road.

Here he chanced to encounter Mr. Juggins, the master of the Amalgamated Association of Nutcracker-makers and Glass-blowers; and together they adjourned for the rest of the day to the 'Jolly Bacchus,' a snug public-house with a vast deal of polished brass about its fittings, and a sanded floor.

Mr. Juggins controlled a hundred and eighty-seven votes in the coming election. He and John were on the most friendly terms. It was mainly due to him that the six wirepullers of the district had chosen their present candidate. Mr. Juggins was immensely ambitious. He was small, and feverish of speech, with a tuft of grey beard, and a habit of winking his eyes for no apparent reason. He received three pounds a week from the nutcracker-makers and glass-blowers, for whom he kindly acted as corporate treasurer, as well as secretary, counsellor, and friend. But it did not content him. He had seraphic visions of State patronage in the hands of John Hammer, M.P., the best pickings of which would in the time to come fall to Barzillai Juggins. Hence the inspired fervour of his utterances to the glass-blowing and nutcracker-making electors, whose votes he held in the palm of his hand. 'John Hammer's your man, my dear friends. He'll put his foot down on the infamous abuses which crush the poor working-man out of the position which is his right by the laws of Heaven, and equity, and Nature, and common-sense. Down, therefore, with the pampered aristocrat and the Pension List, and up with the candidate of the A.A.N.G.!'

Messrs. Scarth, Perkins, Robinson, Abbott, and Banks, the other five wirepullers of Wallsend, were much like Barzillai Juggins. Each had the fingering of a number of votes of the local colliers and mechanics. Each in public professed principles the most unselfish and philanthropic, which all pointed to John Hammer as their eventual representative; and each, in the privacy of his heart, cared only for himself.

These five worthy gentlemen were married. Juggins, on the other hand, was a bachelor. The women of the district—a hard-tongued class—were wont to say in jest that Barzillai would

explode his wife out of doors two or three times a day, if he had such a tender helpmate ; and perhaps he would.

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It was the twentieth of May—the month of flowers—and the election was to take place on the twenty-seventh.

There seemed so little doubt about the issue between John Hammer, the labour candidate, and the Honourable Ponsonby Vane Fitzroy, the Conservative nominee, that the result was held to be a foregone conclusion by the press. John Hammer, who could write a good text-hand, spent his time in answering letters of congratulation and inquiries about his political intentions from men whom he had never seen or heard of. He had resigned his situation as foreman in the Ten Acre Coal Company a month back, and existed penuriously upon his small savings. It seemed only reasonable that the committee of the labour candidate should make his allowance date from the day of his resignation ; but to this they demurred. Their funds, they said, would not admit of such lavishness. Besides, it would be a breach of common prudence.

Mrs. Hammer grumbled mightily about this, sighed in secret for the solid pound a week which John had been wont to give her for kitchen purposes, and put lard instead of butter upon the bread.

‘Thee bist a fule, woman!’ was all the comfort her husband gave her when she ventured to air her grievances.

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On the twenty-first of May Mr. Juggins received a letter which made him wink a hundred and fifty times without a pause. It began, ‘My dear Mr. Juggins,’ and ended, ‘Believe me, your sincere friend, Wilhelmina Dashville.’

It was nothing less than an invitation to lunch in a quiet and friendly way at Dashville Castle with the Countess of Dashville.

The phraseology of the letter delighted Mr. Juggins beyond anything. This sentence, for example :—

‘I have heard from my husband and others quite sufficient about your disinterested love for the working-classes to feel no scruple in addressing you as a fellow-labourer in that grand cause ;’ &c. &c.

Moreover, it was so affable ; and her ladyship actually condescended to be poetic.

'Come just as you are, my dear Mr. Juggins, for

If there's a cause,
Beyond other, that draws
My utmost scorn and loathing,
'Tis the fuss fools make,
And the pains they take,
About their outward clothing.'

This was the more remarkable, seeing that the Countess was famous for her gowns.

Mr. Juggins put his chin in his hand, and reflected. The upshot was that he resolved to lunch with the Countess of Dashville. Why should he not? After all, was not a Countess a human being like himself? That she was the wife of a Conservative lord was an accident for which she could not be held accountable. And so Barzillai made a careful toilet in his Sabbath black, and departed in a cab. But he had the tact to dismiss the cabman a mile from the Castle. Thither he walked alone, on the ends of his toes, with his trousers turned up, looking askance at everyone he met in the lanes. Once inside the park gates, he dusted himself nicely from head to toe with his dark-blue silk pocket-handkerchief, took a sprig of red geranium from a paper bag, set it in his buttonhole, and approached the grandiose portico of the Castle.

That night there was a meeting of the labour candidate's committee, but Mr. Juggins, for some unexplained reason, did not attend it.

Mrs. Scarth, whose husband was the secretary of the Corporate Society of Wallsend Nailmakers, a powerful body, representing one hundred and twenty-four votes, was frightened almost out of her seven senses the next day by the sudden apparition of a stranger, leading by the hand her much-loved firstborn son, Reuben, howling furiously.

'Are you Mrs. Scarth? This is the house, my dear little lad, is it not? Don't cry so,' said the stranger, all in a breath.

'Please to step inside, sir,' said the nailmakers' secretary's wife, when she had scanned her offspring with a mother's regarding eye, and found him sound of limb.

'It was in this way, Mrs. Scarth. I was walking into Wallsend to see my friend Mr. Parchment, the attorney, when I heard a horrible wail from among the pit-banks. Without an instant's hesitation I left the road and clambered over the rubbish heaps in the direction of the cry. Now be composed, there's a dear

woman, though I feel it will give you a shock. What did I see but a tall, dark man, with a forbidding countenance, stooping into an abandoned pit-shaft, and holding something over the abyss. The something proved to be this little boy, and it was his pair of little feet that I saw. Never mind how I rescued him. The man must have been deranged; at any rate, he has made himself scarce.'

Mrs. Scarth snatched her darling to her heart, and sobbed audibly. 'He was going to his school, the precious! like the other lads. God bless you, sir!'

The stranger stayed with the poor woman longer than seemed necessary. At parting she took his proffered hand in the most cordial manner.

'I shall never forget you, sir—never,' she said; 'and I will certainly do the best I can with him.'

'A thousand thanks. I am more than proud that I have been able to do you a service.'

That afternoon Mrs. Scarth and her husband had a strenuous palaver. At first Mr. Scarth was obdurate as marble. But his wife used certain discreet conjugal menaces, which at length had the desired effect, and in the end the nailmakers' representative gave way.

At the committee-meeting of the labour candidate that night neither Mr. Scarth nor Mr. Juggins appeared.

Mr. Robinson acted as the mouthpiece and mind of a number of colliers who were glad to be relieved of the trouble of thinking for themselves. He was an exemplary young man, who wore spectacles, read Mr. Smiles' 'Self Help' in bed, and thoroughly believed that it was the duty of every man to advance himself in the eyes of the world by any means whatever—of course, assuming that the means were lawful. He attended a variety of improving classes in the Free Library, and had written excellent examination papers on mathematics, English literature, French, Latin, chemistry, and modern philosophy. He also played the violin, and could recite his own poetry with beautiful effect. By some he was reckoned the most accomplished person in Wallsend; and it was said the rector himself feared him upon the platform. For all that, poor young Mr. Robinson did not flourish.

'Now come, Mr. Robinson,' said a certain stranger who had called upon the colliers' mouthpiece and mind upon the twenty-third of May. 'To-day is Saturday. I'll give you till Monday. A man with your studious and refined tastes ought not to hesitate, it seems to me. You will be in the best, and, to you, the most

congenial of society—that of the great minds of the illustrious dead, you know; and for my part, I needn't look at you twice to prognosticate that, with such literary facilities as the situation would give you, you could make a name for yourself as an author.'

'O—h,' gasped Mr. Robinson; 'do you really think so? It is one of the fondest ambitions—of—my existence; and yet——'

'And yet what?'

'I—I am not sure that it would be a right thing to do.'

'Think it over; that is all I ask. Here's my address. Send me a line, "Yes" or "No," and the matter may be considered finished. Good-bye, I must be off.'

Mr. Robinson grasped the stranger's hand, and was about to let it drop and return to his studies, when something impelled him to give it another little squeeze, and whisper with a sigh: 'Well, sir, so be it. I will do what you desire.'

That settled a hundred and fifty-six more votes.

The next day was Sunday, which brought Mr. Banks, the ironworkers' representative, divers duties of extreme importance. Mr. Banks was leading deacon of the Mount Carmel Chapel of the New Primitive Methodist Connexion. The ironworkers did not think much of John Hammer, especially as their works were the property of a relation of the Conservative candidate, who might be tempted to propose something disagreeable in the matter of wages. However, Mr. Banks was a potent force in the district, and he was to have his own way.

At the morning service the deacon's sharp eyes discerned a pleasant-faced stranger, and after service the stranger accosted Mr. Banks.

'Come into the pastor's room,' said the deacon—'he'll have changed his clothes and gone by now.'

'Thank you, Mr. Banks,' said the stranger, 'but I think our conversation will be better in the open air, and as the day is mild for the time of the year, if you have no objection——'

'Not a mite,' said Mr. Banks.

When they had walked up and down the pavement in front of the ugly little chapel for about half an hour, the angry looks and gesticulations with which the deacon had at first seemed to receive the stranger's communication wholly disappeared. It was dinner-time ere they parted, and at parting Mr. Banks smiled a beaming smile upon the stranger.

'It'll be an acceptable wurruk, sir, and do a power of good. One can't hev a fold too large for the stray lambs that hev to be gathered into it.'

'Good-bye,' said the stranger. 'You shall hear from me.'

'I wish you good day, sir,' said Mr. Banks; and as he walked to his home he sniffed the smell of roast meat which pervaded the thoroughfare, and held his head high, and looked everyone and everything full in the face, with an expression in which conscious uprightness and contentment were agreeably mingled.

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The committee-meeting of the labour candidate on Monday evening was a melancholy farce. Only Mr. Perkins and Mr. Abbott attended it. Mr. Perkins represented the locksmiths, and Mr. Abbott the tinplate-workers.

'What I wornt to know is this,' said Mr. Perkins to Mr. Abbott: 'Who's to pay for the vehicles to bring the men to the pole?'

'I hev heerd that they're all took by Fitzroy,' remarked Mr. Abbott, with a mournful shake of the head.

'And why arn't the others here, eh? Robinson, I know, has bin called to his sick mother; but he ain't all.'

'Banks, I heerd, have had a kick-up at his chapel—something smart's on, I've heerd.'

'Well, Mr. Abbott, I don't know as we've nowt to stay for, and I'll be glad of my bellyful at supper. And so I wish you "good-night."'

'Good-night, Mr. Perkins, sir,' said Mr. Abbott, who was a common mechanic, whereas Mr. Perkins employed fifteen hands in a factory of his own.

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The next morning, which was Tuesday, the twenty-sixth of May, Mr. Perkins met Mr. Juggins in the street, and promptly stopped him.

'Are we all of the same mind that we was a while ago?' he asked; and then he tightened his mouth, and tried to look intelligent.

'Hush!' said Mr. Juggins, with a finger set vertically across his lips for one moment. 'Come into the Temperance House, and have a cup of coffee.'

'What's the meaning of it all?' continued Mr. Perkins, much excited.

'Things be changed, Perkins,' said Mr. Juggins, when they were seated in the far corner of the big room, and concealed from the outer world by the vapour that eddied from two elephantine mugs. 'What do you think of Hammer taking to drink in this way?'

'Drink!' exclaimed Mr. Perkins, and his finger involuntarily grasped the bit of blue ribbon that patched his coat where he had frayed it against the desk.

'It was only the other night I saw him in the "Jolly Bacchus" in a state—well, I won't particularise. We all know what that means. The man ain't strong enough in the head. If he thinks fit to elevate himself on account of two birds in the bush which he thinks are both his, what'll it be when he becomes our master, so to speak, and free to play the gentleman at our expense?'

'I'm main sorry,' said Mr. Perkins, meditatively; 'but, of course, there's nowt more to be done. What shall you do?'

'It doesn't matter to anybody what. Fitzroy must come in, whether we back him or don't. Better an aristocrat than a drunkard.'

'Much better,' sighed Mr. Perkins. 'Then we needn't trouble about hiring cars and all that?'

'Of course not. Don't you see, we ought to have done it weeks ago, really. It's providential, and nothing else, that we held our hands.'

'Well!' said Mr. Perkins.

'Well!' said Mr. Juggins; and thus they parted.

To his extreme irritation, Mr. Abbott, the tinplate representative, found himself all alone in the committee-room of the labour candidate on the Tuesday evening. Having clumped up and down the chamber for half an hour, with his hands in his pockets, he departed, and called upon Mr. Juggins.

'Mr. Juggins, sir,' said he, as soon as he saw Barzillai, 'I'll be dommed if I hev anything more to do wi' Jack Hammer. He've cost me, I reckon, fourteen hours this past fortnight, at a shilling and a ha'penny the hour, and I be tired of it. It's different for you, mebbe, being, as you be, treasurer as well as Union deputy.'

'Sit down, Ezra,' said Mr. Juggins, kindly; and then, having brought forth a black bottle of Old Tom, he soothed Mr. Abbott's wounded feelings, and informed him that it was all over with Hammer's chances. 'Everyone knows it except Hammer himself.'

'Dash me!' observed Ezra Abbott, when he had digested some of the Old Tom and this information, 'it be the fust toime I've took up wi' this bisness, and it'll be the last. I baint a-goin' messin' after labour candidates any more.'

By the desertion of Mr. Perkins, John Hammer lost a hundred and eleven votes, and by that of Mr. Abbott ninety more. The six wirepullers could in all account for seven hundred and ninety-six votes, out of a constituency of thirteen hundred and fifty-one electors. The shopkeepers, professional men, and employers of labour, who comprised the bulk of the five hundred and fifty-five other votes, were, almost to a man, for the Conservative candidate.

One very odd feature about this election was the ignorance in which John Hammer was kept about the change of front of the men whom he had every reason to believe were his supporters. Up to the last he had no doubt about his success, and on the Tuesday night he spent an entire hour trying to explain to a lady-correspondent his views on the women's suffrage question.

'Females,' he remarked in this letter, 'differ but little from males, and have more trials to bear than men, and it would be a shame if we men were to deny them the compensations that are theirs by right; respect for female opinion is one of the strongest points in my programme.'

'John, dear, won't you come to your bed?' entreated his anxious spouse while he was writing this.

'Hould thy tongue, woman! Thou'rt cat and kittens all in one for talking,' was his reply. It was surprising how different his written style had already become from his style colloquial.

But the good creature, his wife, was not deterred by this rebuff from trying her best to prepare her husband for the physical fatigues of the morrow.

'There'll be a bit bread, wi' a sausage in it, in thy right tail-pocket, an' a flat bottle in the other. Tak' care how you sit; and do, John, if they want to cheer (chair) thee, see as it's a strong un, for thee beest no light weight.'

'Wilt stop thy gabbing or not?' shouted the labour candidate, tempestuously; and then there was silence.

The Wallsend election will long be remembered for its sensational surprise. It was known that the Primrose Dames and

their Knights and Esquires had been extraordinarily active at the last moment in trying to undermine the Radical interest in the borough, but few indeed supposed that they had succeeded. Most people who saw the Countess of Dashville driving about the grimy streets thought it was lost labour on her part. John Hammer, who went to and fro in a mild one-horse shay, and attended by a single faithful henchman, would, it was generally believed, be returned by a large majority. John had been advised a fortnight previously to spend the day in this pleasant though somewhat monotonous public display of himself, and he faithfully acted upon the suggestion, at a cost of seventeen shillings and sixpence out of his own pocket. At times he marvelled that he saw little or nothing of the various committee-men who had been so enthusiastic about his candidature. But he consoled himself with the idea that they were fighting manfully on his behalf.

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The result of the poll was announced at eleven o'clock the same evening, and the Hon. Ponsonby Vane Fitzroy was declared duly elected by a majority of eleven hundred and nine.

Poor John Hammer received only forty-five votes.

Messrs. Juggins, Scarth, Robinson, Banks, Perkins, and Abbott had prevailed only too well with the free and independent electors, of whom they were the advisers. Hardly a dozen of them had acted upon their own instincts.

John Hammer returned to his cottage at four-and-six a week worn out, depressed, and so stupefied by the disappointment and the coldness of those he had believed his friends that he could not think he was in his right senses.

Mrs. Hammer, however, good soul, received him much as the father in the parable welcomed his prodigal son.

'Never thee mind, my man,' she said, cheerfully, as she bustled about a prime pork chop she was cooking for him; 'it be all for the best, I be sure. Thee an' me would ha' bin miserable in Lunnon; we ain't fit for 't. Thee'll soon get the old wurruk agin, and then we'll be happy, an' be able to buy ninepenny butter agin. John, my man, I canna help sayin' it, but I be right glad thee'st lost, an' I canna help it.'

'Because thee bist a fule!' blurted John, with a bent head, as he turned towards the pork chop, which had been thrust smoking under his nose,

I'm certain, in that hour of bliss
That saw us in this very street,
Cowslips came crowding round to kiss
Her feet.

And surely as that cab forlorn
Went rumbling off behind its hack
I marked a nascent wing adorn
His back.

And cabby, noting in a trice
So unmistakable a pair,
Forbore from asking more than twice
His fare.

And here on simple cakes and tea
We supped like demigods of old,
From plates and cups that seemed to me
Of gold.

Ah! Araminta, how you floored
The buttered roll, the Sally Lunn!
While, watching you, I half ignored
My bun.

Brief rapture: Rhadamanthine watch,
That points the fatal hour again,
And shows we've scarcely time to catch
The train.

Still branded on my aching sight
I see that station's mighty span,
That seemed to scorn a thing so slight
As man ;

Hard and un pitying as the glare
Of noonday sun, that daily flouts
A thousand breaking hearts or there-
Abouts.

Now of those halcyon joys bereft,
A solitary man I range,
With memories and some coppers left
In change.

I've seen that cabman once, and he,
Unlettered ruffian ! only winked,
And Pegasus seem to be
Extinct.

While as for cowslips, though I've stayed
And searched that asphalt smooth as glass,
I can't discern a single blade
Of grass.

Under a universal ban
All Nature hangs a sulky head,
As if she'd lately heard that Pan
Was dead.

The sparrows in their native square
That stepped so lustily of late
Have lost their old commanding air
And gait.

Even the Muses, whom I knew
Familiarly in happier times,
Now spare me grudgingly my few
Poor rhymes.

O Araminta, quench this pain !
'Twere better you had kept away,
But since you *have* come, come again,
And stay.

OUR THRUSHES.

THREE species only of these are known to the general public ; we have six in this country. Three of them are regular migrants, visiting and leaving us again as the seasons come round. All coast dwellers who are anything of field naturalists are well aware of this fact. I have seen the sand-hills and the drier portion of the flats in the North Kent marshlands covered with birds about to migrate, waiting for a right wind to take them over the Channel.

'Ah, poor things!' an old boatman would say, 'they be waitin' for a right breeze, an' then they'll get out o' harber quick.' After the breeze had come, hardly a bird would be visible until the next army of travellers arrived. My own intimate acquaintance with them has been made in the fertile and well-wooded counties of Southern England, where the whole family can be heard and studied to the best advantage.

On the hills, and about the moors in the season, you will find that shyest and most wary member of the whole family, the ring-ouzel, called by the rustics the 'white-throated blackbird.'

Great clouds sweep over the hills, casting, as they travel, moving shadows on the heather and bright green turf of the moor. It is green, for summer's fierce heat has passed ; rain has fallen at times just enough to let us know that we may expect no more settled summer weather. We need not regret this, for autumn is clothing the hillside and the moor with the richest broken tones of crimson, olive, orange, grey, and buff. Rough gullies intersect the moor in many parts, flanked on either side by high banks ; although these can hardly be called roads, yet they are used for that purpose. They are, in reality, huge masses of stone, covered with a thin crust of peat soil. Changes in the weather have affected some parts, causing them to crumble, and laying bare a cliff of greystone covered here and there with the creeping vegetation of the moors.

Here the sparrow-hawk comes to perch, after one of his flights ; but he takes wing again with a scream of mingled rage and fear, as his eye catches sight of the roaming naturalist, who lies crouched in the stunted juniper and luxuriant heather. The sparrow-hawks come here at stated times through the day, and here, too,

they roost at night. The stunted form of juniper I allude to, you will find in certain parts of the moor; on the open hilly portions you will find splendid specimens of the juniper tree, whole thickets of them, such as would be considered priceless ornaments in a gentleman's grounds. They would not live there if they were transplanted; so much the better, they beautify the moorside, which is free to all. It is in such spots as these we have seen the ring-ouzel; he feeds, to a certain extent, on the juniper berries; but the richer crop of berries of the mountain ash, flashing out in crimson patches on the hills, have a far greater attraction for him. To this bill of fare is added vast quantities of other berries that are found all over the moor, together with insect life in profusion. The white-throated blackbird of the moors has a good table spread for him, that is why he stays here for a time before he returns to the lands which he left, to come up to higher ground. To the rustic dwellers of the moors and hill-side he is a bird of great interest; I have never known one of them shoot or trap him; I believe it is 'the white strap round his neck,' as they term it, that saves him. It may not be that alone; his visits are irregular and mysterious; at least so they seem to the simple country folks who, although they are usually familiar with the habits of the creatures that live near them, do not understand the varying influences that at times affect the migrating movements of birds. In spite of the light that has been thrown on the subject by the keepers of lighthouses round the coast of Great Britain—who have, at the request of some of our zealous ornithologists, saved one wing of each species that, being attracted by the light, had struck against the glass or been captured fluttering round the lighthouse—this varying in the migrating habits of the birds remains a vexed question with the most earnest students in natural history. In spite, too, of the statement in Holy Scripture, that 'the stork in the heavens knoweth her appointed time.' The most accepted theories are apt to break down, and so-called learned men have been found to be in error occasionally on simpler matters even than this. At the present time, 1890, it has been universally acknowledged by our greatest field-naturalists—men who have visited all parts of Great Britain, even the remote Shetlands as well as the Continent, in their earnest researches—that the breeding-place of a few of the small waders that crowd some of our shores in the fall of the year remains to this day unknown, although the young ones are seen with the

nest-down still among their feathers. Why the ring-ouzel comes and goes sometimes singly, sometimes in flock, is also a mystery.

The name of 'storm-cock' has been fitly given to the missel-thrush, which is the largest member of the thrush family. He is more a bird of the woods, except in breeding or nesting time, than any of the others. To a certain extent he is a more showy bird than his very near relative the song-thrush; his breast is more brightly coloured, and the spots on it are larger and darker. He is a bold bird, and he looks it; we hear him loudly singing in the storm, and when all other birds, the robin excepted, are silent.

The rain falls in torrents, the wind blows as early March winds do blow at times, bunching up the clouds in mountain-like heaps which sail slowly along, being far too heavy to move quickly. Hail rattles down also, but there is a short lull after a time, and a small piece of blue shows in the sky, about the size of a child's pinafore. It is enough to start our storm-cock. The wind is still blowing a gale; nature's own organ pealing through the woods. That suits our bird well; he dashes out from his cover and up on to the highest twig of that old ash; grasping it with his strong feet, he swings to and fro in the rushing wind, and sings as he sways. It stirs one's blood to hear his wild clarion notes, now high, now low, and again almost shrieking in wild glee as he tosses and swings. The road may be very wet and slushy, and the wind may send a drenching shower of drops over you as it stirs the twigs and branches of the trees under which you walk, but who cares for that when watching that brave bird and listening to his joyous, defiant song! When the missel-thrush is nesting, no bird is more pugnacious in defence of his home and what it contains. Whether it be hawk, owl, crow, cat, stoat, weasel, or rat that comes near with sinister intent, he and his mate will go for it with a will.

If it be a feathered enemy, they will make the feathers fly in a surprising fashion; if it be a four-footed one, they will dash down and buffet the creature. I have seen cats bound off at top speed, glad enough to get to cover out of reach of a pair of injured missel-thrushes. But the courage of the bird frequently causes it to lose its own life. For if a stoat comes on to the velvety lawn of a country house, and the bird, usually shy and wary, happens to have built in one of the trees there, a duel has been fought, which has ended in the death of the brave bird.

Some of our readers may not be familiar with stoats and weasels

in a state of nature. It is very certain that specimens in zoological collections, even the most artistically mounted specimens that our museums contain, will not give you the least idea of their beauty and extraordinary agility when free and at large. Stoats or weasels are not desirable visitors on a lawn; mice of various kinds, however, are more destructive to flower-beds than all the other pests put together; and the weasel family are the sworn foes and exterminators, if permitted, of mice and rats, so their visits may be fairly tolerated.

Some gentlemen that I know will not allow guns to be used near their dwellings; they are quite willing to allow nature's own police to keep order, and they are wise in this. To see a weasel with a short-tailed mouse or vole, almost as large as himself, carried retriever fashion in his mouth, is a very interesting sight. I have seen it, and bid him good luck in his hunting many a time. There are at the present time far too few of his kind about. He will dart from a flower-bed on to the lawn, a perfect model of strength and activity; his bright eyes glisten as he looks round about in all directions before he begins to play. The most skilful acrobat is a clumsy pretender compared with that little fellow; he rolls, vaults, and tumbles in all directions, enjoying himself to his heart's content. From one of the trees on the lawn two missel-thrushes, with angry, grating screams, rush down at him. He is ready for the assault, with his head up and his forefeet well together; as he stands perfectly quiet, he might be photographed. In one instant the scene is changed, and you see a confused lot of wing and tail feathers, dashing now up, now down, and then sideways; some brown object mixed up with them, while the screams and shrieks from the birds are nearly deafening. The row will stop as quickly as it began; for one bird with a chattering note of fear flies off, leaving the cock-bird in the stoat's mouth. The creature stands as still as possible for a few moments, and then he takes his prey into one of the flower-beds to eat him.

Lately, in one of my rambles, I came on a brood of missel-thrushes that had just left the nest. They were foraging for food in one of the upland meadows close to the woods, and I stood in the midst of them as they fed. It was a pretty sight; as one or the other got near me, they would look at me with their bright eyes, open their mouths, appear to chide me for my presence, and then go on searching for food. Both parents were close at hand, now and again sending out a ringing note of warning, as one or

other of their brood looked up. He seems to tell us when he sings that winter is past ; and so he is always welcome to us.

That universal favourite, the blackbird, with his jet-black plumage and orange-coloured bill, is well known to every little toddler that lives in the country. 'Blackey,' as they call him, is the favourite, as a rule, in preference to the thrush with the country people. Independently of his own rich song, he has a natural talent for mimicry, which dogs and cats find out to their cost. Rustic children think much of him ; they will tell you that he knows them all ; and indeed to credit the intelligence displayed by him you would need to live in some country house for a time, where one has been reared in a cage. All the sounds that he hears, especially if they are of a squeaking or whistling nature, he repeats to perfection ; if he sees the dog in the garden or about the house, he will whistle for him exactly as his master does, and in so vigorous a tone that he would lead the dog to suppose that his services are required in the most urgent manner. Away rushes the dog round the house, out into the meadow ; and back he comes with his tail and ears depressed, for he feels that he has been made a fool of. Then the youngsters will shout and clap their hands in glee, to think how clever their favourite 'Blackey' is. The blackbird cocks his head on one side, taps the bottom of his cage with his bill, spreads his tail out and dashes over his perches to and fro, at a most furious rate, quite pleased at his own performances. I have known large figures offered for a talented blackbird, belonging to a country lad, such as a brand new suit of clothes and five shillings as well, all to no purpose. His clothes were the worse for wear, his shoes were as bad as they could be ; but, for all that, 'he warn't agoin' to let Blackie go.'

The rain has ceased falling, and the wind that brought it has died away. All is quiet ; things are resting. A light vapour rises from the meadows by the river and floats away ; it is the steam from the hot, thirsty earth ; the sun is sinking, and the light in slanting rays shines on the wet young foliage, and illumines the rustic spire close at hand. The cattle are quiet ; they are enjoying the precious coolness to their hearts' content. Not a sound is heard save the 'chirrup' of the partridge as he calls to his mate in the furrow. Without one single preparatory note, some feathered creature has burst out into glorious song. It is the blackbird, and now from over the river another joins him. As we lean over a field-gate to listen to him, the scent of the fresh-

turned furrows comes to us, bringing a feeling of life and health with it. The bird's song rises and falls, to ring out again, if possible, sweeter than before; it brings back to us many memories of happy boyhood and childhood's careless days.

Pepys in his *Diary* has mentioned the blackbird. On May 22, 1663, he has this passage entered: 'Rendall, the house carpenter at Deptford, hath sent me a fine blackbird which I went to see. He tells me he was offered twenty shillings for him as he came along, he do so whistle.' On the 23rd there is another entry: 'Waked this morning between four and five by my blackbird, which whistled as well as ever I heard any; only it is the beginning of many tunes, very well; but then leaves them and goes no further.' He is best in his native thickets, that is his proper place and home, but to those who keep him and treat him well, he is as clever and amusing as any Indian mynah. I prefer him, for more reasons than one; it is impossible to teach a blackbird naughty things, such as a mynah acquires very easily.

The song-thrush, or mavis, is so well known that we need not enter into details to any great extent about him or his ways. As a destroyer of snails we place him in the first rank. He is a gentle bird, and his song is as well known as that of the lark. He, too, like the blackbird, sings after a shower; but his note is a very different one; besides this, he sings far more frequently than the blackbird, and there are more of the former birds about than of the latter. Taking the year all round, we have, at a rough computation, considered that you would see four thrushes to one blackbird. I do not state this as a fact: blackbirds are more hiding birds than thrushes, and far more wary in all their actions; it is only my impression in a general way, after years of observation. The blackbird likes fruit; the song-thrush will have it when there is any; strawberries, raspberries, currants, gooseberries, he will have at any risk if he dies in the attempt, which is frequently the case; cherries, too, he loves dearly.

It is no light task to look after fruit, even when it is all netted and pegged down; for the thrush will peck and scratch a hollow out and step underneath the bough; where one has gone others will follow, and work sad mischief. If a blackbird is under the net, he yells out his frantic alarm as usual: the thrush only clucks. In some gardens from twenty to thirty thrushes are often captured during a day. As at this time they are first-rate eating, they atone for their sins by making a dinner now and then. It is only

natural that they should have fruit if they can get it, but one thing I must say, dear lover of birds though I am, if the fruit were not protected and well watched, the blackbirds, thrushes, and missel-thrushes would clear the lot. It is a wonder where they all come from, directly it is ripe, and some even before it is so; they turn up in numbers from all quarters. No more hunting about the meadows and hedgerows for such common things as worms and snails when there are these far more tempting dainties about. It would never do to fire into a tree or bush loaded with fruit; so the gun is not used, only netting. No doubt, poor things, they think if they get in they can get out, but that is another matter entirely; in nine cases out of ten they never do. Other birds will come to the fruit, but the three we have particularly mentioned are the chief culprits, and they suffer for it. There is not the least fear of their getting scarce; we receive hosts from the Continent each season; they fly to and fro across the Channel.

Thrushes are essentially the choristers of the woodlands, but they will desert their quiet retreat for a tempting gooseberry bush in a cottage garden.

The fieldfare, or felt, is the dandy of the tribe; for a member of the thrush family, he has a coat of many colours. He is a migrant, shy and wary to a degree, and the favourite game bird with all young sportsmen. At any rate he gives them opportunities of acquiring the cardinal virtue of patience. They must indeed wait for him unless the weather is very severe; and that alters matters considerably. I and my companions have tramped many a mile after him in our young days, and brought the gun home safely, without having come to grief, but also without fieldfares.

It is a well-known fact now, or it ought to be so, that there is a larger and smaller variety of the same species, in some of the bird tribes. I will state one instance, that of the common wheat-ear; this is well known to the dwellers in the downs that these birds frequent. In our young days we used to shoot, when we could, two varieties of fieldfares, the fieldfare common, and what we in our juvenile fashion called the pigeon fieldfare, or felt; the larger varieties are the rarest. I know opinions are divided on these points, and the matter has been set aside as doubtful, but the facts remain all the same; even now we hear of pigeon felts from some of our old rustic friends. One habit the fieldfare has, which is a very strange one for a thrush—he will roost on the

ground ; I know this, because I saw a lot once caught in a lark net.

For the gentle redwing, who in his native wilds is called the Norwegian nightingale, we have a tender regard. He is, we think, more dependent on a supply of insect food in some shape or other, than any other member of his family ; the consequence is that in the inclement seasons he suffers severely. I have seen him hunting for a bare subsistence round the edges of brooks in the low-lying water meadows, and pitied him many a time. He suffers silently, there is no rush and flutter with him, or any struggling to secure the scanty food ; he only flutters from one spot to another, gets what he can and makes the best of it. Sometimes he will stay long enough to sing ; this takes place very rarely, but he has done so, to my knowledge, in some water meadows. The bird was perching on the willow boughs when he sang. It was a wild sweet note, different in all respects to that of the others of his family ; it might not have been the full song of the bird ; he did not stay there, so no definite conclusion could be arrived at. In one or two instances he has bred in England ; this has been proved in the most practical manner, but these instances have been extremely rare. Some winters the redwings are far more numerous than others ; in mild winters we have seen, comparatively speaking, few. No doubt the food supply influences them to a great degree, for I think our favourite, the gentle redwing, is the most tender of the thrush family.

With White's thrush, the goldbreasted thrush, and the nightingale-thrush, we have nothing to do ; for they can barely be called visitors in our land. I have only given a short account of our British thrushes proper.

EIGHT DAYS.

BY THE AUTHOR OF 'THE TOUCHSTONE OF PERIL.'

I will a round unvarnished tale deliver.—*Othello*.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

THE LETTER REFUSED. IMPRISONED AGAIN.

THE young man, on whose movements so much depends, knows the whole country-side up to Abdoolapore very well, and so is able to make his way along the least frequented village pathways. He passes over the eight miles unmolested. Arrived, he leaves the 'native' city on one side and passes into the English station; he moves along the deserted roads and by the burnt-down bungalows of the cantonment. He inquires at a little bazaar for the residence of the Brigadier, to whom he has been charged to deliver the missive, and is told that he and the other English residents have left the cantonment and taken up their quarters in a fortified enclosure known as the 'Dum-duma.' This very road leads up to it. The young man is very well acquainted with the native, but not with the European portion of Abdoolapore; and so he gets quite close up to the fortified position, which is all that the Europeans at present occupy or hold, without knowing it. He is passing by a small house by the side of the road, in which there is an outlying picket of English soldiers, when he is challenged by the sentry, and not knowing the meaning or import of the words, he continues to press on; is challenged again, and then again, as he continues to hurry on, full of the importance of his mission, the saving of so many human lives—is he not too a Ramanandi? And then he gives a jump as he hears the report of a musket, and a bullet whistles by him within an inch of his nose. And then comes the sound of rapid footsteps, and he finds himself in the grasp of a couple of English soldiers, who hurry him rapidly off the road and into the temporary guard-house.

'Shure, he is a sapoy—ye can tell it by the cut of the whisker!' says an Irish soldier.

That special cut of whisker was to cost many an innocent native his life during the coming two years.

‘He is a bloody mutineer,’ says an English soldier.

The Hindostanee language is a *lingua franca* that had its rise in the camps and bazaars of the great river-side mart and *entrepôt* and metropolis of Delhi, where the different-tongued natives of Hindostan and Western Asia met. Now has come a large admixture of English. The young messenger spoke his own village dialect, and the soldiers spoke the barrack-room Hindostanee, in which English, and not Sanscrit, or Hindee, or Persian, forms the leading element. Consequently they did not understand one another. But still the captors could comprehend the reiterated ‘Brigadier Sahib, Brigadier Sahib,’ of the captive.

‘Shure he wants to see the Brigadier. He may have something to say to him. Let us take him to him. It’s but a step.’

The Brigadier has his temporary quarters just within the adjoining gateway of the enclosure. The captive spy, as the soldiers deem him, is conveyed thither. When the Brigadier’s servants announce to him, with a good deal of excitement, that the soldiers at the neighbouring picket have seized a spy, it becomes an accepted fact that the man is a spy.

‘But why have they brought him here?’ says the Brigadier irritably.

It is now within a few minutes of two o’clock, at which hour the Brigadier has his tiffin. All his meals are of the utmost importance to him; he lives only for them and his rubbers of whist; but he is specially fond of his tiffin, for that is the meal at which he has his first bottle of beer, and, his office work being over before then, after it comes the much loved afternoon sleep.

‘Why do they not take him on to Major Cox?’

‘The prisoner, the spy, says he is most anxious to speak to the Presence.’

‘He is not armed, he has no arms about him?’ says the Brigadier anxiously.

‘Oh, no.’

‘Then tell them to bring him in—to bring him in.’

The sergeant and the soldiers make their military salute. The sentry makes his report.

The man was trying to steal by the outpost, was trying to get stealthily—most stealthily—by it, and refused to halt when challenged, so he (Murphy) fired at him, and the other men—Private

Higgins, and Private Bell, and Private Doherty—ran out and caught him. Then he kept saying, 'Brigadier,' 'Brigadier,' and so they brought him here.

'Why do you want to see me?' demands the Brigadier, sharply.

The young neophyte is of a nervous temperament. He does not like his present position. He has always held these white men as a very terrible people. And he has heard that the wrath of the Englishmen in Abdoolapore burns just now strongly against his fellow-countrymen, several of whom have been disposed of very summarily by hanging or shooting, within the last few days. And so it is in a trembling, stuttering voice, obviously indicative of his guilt, that he utters the sentence:

'I am a disciple of the Guru Toolsi Dass, the Ramanandi——'

'Gurus, and Tulsis, and Ramnands,' interrupts the Brigadier angrily. 'What is he talking about? Probably pretending to be mad. A favourite dodge with the natives. I know them well. He was trying to steal by the picket, you say?'

'Trying to steal quietly by it.' Proud of his exploit, the young soldier has come to believe this sincerely. Alas for poor facts! And what a thing is human testimony! 'He thought, sir, that I would be in the shadow of the house, on the other side.'

'And if he had got into the enclosure we could not have known that he was not one of our own coolies. He could have done what he liked there, the scoundrel. Take him away—take him to Major Cox!' cries the fat old Brigadier in his thick husky voice.

'He is saying something about a *chit*' (note, letter), 'sir,' says his good-natured young aide-de-camp, who is also in the room.

'Let my hands be unloosed, in the name of God!' cries the young messenger earnestly.

'Very good, unloose his hands,' says the Brigadier. 'But keep an eye on him. He may mean mischief. He looks a scoundrel, a most thorough scoundrel.' The lad had a face like that of Melanchthon.

His hands free, the captive gropes about amid his clothing, and produces a little bit of paper—he is in a violent perspiration, due not only to the heat of the day but to the perilous position in which he finds himself: the paper is consequently damp and discoloured—and he hands the minute missive to one of the soldiers.

'Why, it is a dirty piece of common bazaar paper,' says the Brigadier. 'Phew! do not bring it near me. You can read, corporal?'

'Yes, sir.'

'Is my name on it?'

'No, sir.'

'Look inside—is my name there?'

'No, sir.'

'I thought it could not be for me—a piece of common bazaar paper.'

'It is not English, sir.'

'I thought the fellow was lying. Throw it into the waste-paper basket.'

The little bit of paper, laden with so many human lives, goes down into the midst of the pieces of torn paper meant to be cast away. And the khansman announces tiffin, and the old Brigadier says, peremptorily:

'Take him away. Take him away to Major Cox. He shall be tried by court-martial to-morrow.'

Wretches hang that jurymen may dine.

So far as the young messenger knew, the basket might be the proper receptacle for letters; and so far as he was aware the document had been read and his errand fulfilled. In any case, he makes no further remark as the soldiers hurry him away.

And those whose thoughts have followed him with so much of hope and fear have to beguile the hours succeeding his departure as best they may. They pair off. Major Fane and Mrs. Fane retire a little way into the wood and seat themselves at the foot of a tree in order to discuss the events of the last few days quietly together, as they have not been able to do before. And then their thoughts fly away from the present back into the past, that past which seems to come up so vividly before them in this time of trouble.

'I do not believe we have been in a wood together since that last day we drove to Lyndhurst,' says Mrs. Fane. That was shortly after they were married. And then they talk very tenderly together. A cold, calm, self-possessed 'hee! haw!' drawing sort of man; a proud, cold, haughty woman—that is the outside estimate of the two. But now they are gentle and tender and sentimental, as tender and sentimental as any pair of young lovers—as William Hay and their daughter seated together under another tree. For, as has been said before, it is in moments such as these that the strength of the relationship, which is apt to become weakened amid the commonplace of ordinary times, is

felt in its full force. Then a common atmosphere once more envelops the husband and wife, each of whom has brought into the life of the other the most important circumstance in it: then the strength of the tie which binds them to one another and separates them from the rest of the world is felt in all its fullness.

And Beatrice asks William Hay with tender solicitude about his wound, and he makes light of it, though at that very moment it is paining him greatly, and he has a private fear that he may have to lose his arm. And when Beatrice, worn out by the dangers and hardships, the fatigue and physical sufferings of the last three terrible days, cannot help breaking down for a moment—the tension of exertion gone—he sustains and cheers and comforts her, going for comfort to the source from which he has ever been accustomed to draw it. Are not God's everlasting arms under her, and is He not strong to save? And then he repeats some of the verses from the Psalms, which his constant perusal, and the effect of them upon his soul and spirit, and likewise upon his sensitive ear, have made so familiar to him.

'The Lord is my rock, and my fortress and my deliverer.'

'God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore will not we fear.'

'Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me.'

And Lilian Fane and young Hamilton have seated themselves together; they are mere acquaintances, but they are drawn together now by their common youth and their common misfortunes.

'It all seems like a terrible dream,' says Lilian. 'How terrible to have met people only a day or two before—and to be looking forward to meeting them again—and then to see them lying dead before you!'

'Whom did you see lying dead before you?' asks Hamilton, rather a matter-of-fact young man.

'Oh, poor Captain Tucker, and—and Mr. Hill, and—and—and Mr. Walton.'

At last she has arrived at the name which has been foremost. And now the hot tears come rolling down her blistered, burning cheek, and she wipes her eyes with her rent and grimy sleeve: their garments are very much torn as well as very dirty.

And Major Coote passes an hour in hearing the Guru discourse. The Ramanandi could have had a full talk about his creed only with a Kant or a Spinoza. His present auditor is no metaphysician;

but he is a willing listener, and though he has to ask for explanation of some philosophical terms, he has a good colloquial knowledge of the language. And so the Guru launches out into a long discourse on the history and peculiar tenets of his sect.

He describes how the sect was founded by Ramanand and extended by Kabir, who attacked the idolatrous worship of the Brahminical system, and whose teaching greatly influenced Nanuk, the founder of the Sikh religion; how he taught the doctrine of the identity of God and man, God in us and we in Him: that old doctrine of the indwelling God, only so recognisable, 'in Whom we live and move and have our being'—as St. Paul, quoting from an early pantheistic writer, put it—from Whom all things are, Who produced and maintains and pervades all that is: the old Sufy doctrine of the Mahomedans, a doctrine asserted by Grotius and Archbishop Tillotson, and set forth by Pope in his 'Essay on Man'—

All are but parts of one stupendous whole,
Whose body Nature is and God the soul;

how in the world and throughout the universe 'all the existing corpuscles of life derive the effluence of existence from the source of real unity;' how this applies to animals, to all living creatures, as well as to man; how all life is therefore sacred, to destroy it therefore most culpable, to cherish it therefore most meritorious.

It may, perhaps, interest some reader to know that Archbishop Tillotson has set forth this portion of the old doctrine—that the life of animals is divine, that they too have immortal souls—like-wise in his writings. These are his words: 'Immortality imports that the soul remains after the body, and is not corrupted or dissolved with it. And there is no inconvenience in attributing this sort of immortality to the brute creation . . . whether they return into the soul and spirit of the world, if there be any such thing, as some fancy, or whether they pass into the bodies of other animals which succeed in their rooms, is not necessary to be particularly determined. It is sufficient that they are a sort of spirits. And as this was always the common philosophy of the world, so we find it to be a supposition of Scripture, which attributes souls to brutes as well as to man, though of a much inferior nature.'

And now the terrible heat and glare, and the fiery furious dust-laden gale, are upon them. Now the mother and daughters seek shelter within the hut, which has been devoted to their

exclusive use ; and soon they come out again to seek relief from its stifling atmosphere. But the heat and the glare without are terrible. The vast open plain before them seems like a sea of fire. Little whirlwinds fly about on it ; huge dusky dust-cones move slowly across it. The natives hold that each of these contains a devil ; that the smaller whirlwinds are due to the twirling about of the mad little demons, or imps ; the dust columns to the graver movements of the devils of a superior age and size and station. Certainly here is the burning marl, here the fiery cope of heaven, of Milton's Pandemonium ; and here may be Satan and Belial and Beelzebub, and the lesser evil spirits. Then the women retire again into the comparative darkness of the hut, which also prevents the hot wind from blowing directly upon them. Then they rush out again, unable to endure its choking heat. Fierce the heat, terrible the glare, dreadful the fiery dust-laden wind. But the fierce heat is also their friend ; the terrible glare is also their ally ; the fiery dust-laden wind is also their protector. They prevent people from being abroad at this hour. Not a soul comes near the hut. It is, however, like purchasing salvation at the stake. The warmth is considerable. But the centuries go by, and so do the hours. The sun is now dropping down towards the west. The hot wind has begun to lull. The glare which had been torturing becomes only painful ; then only disagreeable. But the mental sufferings of the poor women increase as their bodily sufferings diminish. Their fears rise as the sun goes down. The time for movement and traffic has come again. Now may travellers be expected to appear upon the lonely track. But still it is delightful that the fierce turmoil of the sunshine has ended, that the blustering of the wind has ceased. How soothing is the sense of quiet ! The flagellation is over. If they do not as yet enjoy the direct physical pleasures of these May nights ; if the darkness, soft and black as the eyes of the daughters of the land, is not yet upon them, to lull and soothe the tortured senses ; if the coolness has not yet passed into the air to refresh and revive them—still they enjoy all the pleasure of relief. If this evening glow is vivid, it is very different from the fierce incandescence of the midday hours, and this warmish evening air is very different from the fiery hot wind. The wide-spread solitary plain conveys a sense of peace and quiet. So they sit by the side of the well and enjoy the cool of the evening. The cool of the evening !—you must have passed through the heat of an Eastern

day to know what that means. Then you will understand how it was thought to be pleasant to the Almighty himself. And they watch, feel, the decrease in the warmth and brightness, the increase in the coolness and darkness, with a mental as well as a physical joy, with a delight of the soul as well as of the body. For the former meant danger as well as suffering, the latter means safety as well as pleasure. The day is their enemy, their betrayer; the night their protector, their friend.

What is that cloud of dust upon the track? Is it a herd of cattle? Is it the delivering escort, the escort sent to bring them in? How the hearts of the women beat! It is a troop of horsemen, there is soon no doubt of that. And it comes from the right direction, from the eastward. It comes nearer and nearer. And now the horsemen have left the dusty track and are riding along the harder surface of the plain, and stand out clear above it. What is this? Surely that is the bizarre uniform, so familiar in their eyes, of the Nuwâb of Khizrabad's cavalry? The officers have often laughed at it: they do not feel inclined to laugh at it now.

'Not your men! The Nuwâb's men!' cries the Guru. 'Into the hut at once, before they see you.'

But they have seen them, as is too surely testified by their shouting and yelling; and now they come dashing onward. There is a great commotion among the fugitives. The men hurry the women towards the hut, and hurry them in, and, humiliating as they may feel it, hurry in very fast themselves. They all scuttle in, like rabbits into a burrow. But there is nothing else to be done. And the galloping horsemen have soon reached the edge of the platform. 'Feringhee! Feringhee!' they shout. One man leaps off his horse, and, throwing his reins to another and waving his naked sword above his head, is about to leap on the platform, preparatory to rushing into the hut, when the Guru, who has also mounted on to the platform, confronts him.

'What! would you dare set foot in my place of worship?' he cries. 'Do you not see the images?' and he points to the pottery figures of the curly-tailed monkey-god.

Great is the power of superstition; nay, great is the power of sentiment—the sentiment of religion, of honour, or of good taste. The young man stands still.

'And the hut is part of the platform, and is therefore also sacred and holy, a sanctuary. No man dare set foot within it.'

'But you would not protect these Feringhees, these foreigners,

these oppressors, these slayers of kine?' says the leader of the troop of horsemen.

'They are slayers of kine. But they too have within them the spark divine. I must protect them, as I would protect any other living thing—wolf, or cat, or dog. Besides, they are now in sanctuary, and even a murderer, one who has slain his brother man, is safe in sanctuary.'

'But we have the Nuwâb's orders to seize these people.'

'*These people—why these people?*'

'Oh, we know these are the people—three women and four men, who were confined in the guest-house at Chundpore, and got out of it no one knows how—by the power of magic some say. A young Brahmin came to the Nuwâb's palace and gave information about them——'

'The strayer from the path of righteousness,' exclaims the recluse.

'And we were sent to bring them in. The Brahmin had boasted that they were like birds in a net, and lo! when we reach the village we find the birds flown. We rest and eat our bread, and then we ride about the country in search of them, and at last a shepherd-boy, who had been in this jungle, tells us he had seen a number of English people, six or seven, in it, near your *takia*' (resting-place; literally, pillow), 'and so we determine to come here, and here we find them.'

'And they are now in sanctuary.'

'But, Sir Guru, you are not aware, perhaps, that the reign of the Company is over and that of the Nuwâb re-established. By sheltering these people you will not now obtain the favour of the former, but only incur the displeasure of the latter.'

'What care I, who have left the world, for Company or Nuwâb? What care I for kings or princes? Ramanand is my only prince, Kabir my only king. Their commands alone do I obey, and their command upon me is to help in the sustaining of life, and not in the destroying of it.'

'Then you refuse to obey the orders of the Nuwâb?'

'Yes—and you may go back and tell him so.'

'That will not do, good father!' says the horseman, with a laugh. 'And return to find the birds flown again! No, no! If it is your business to protect these people, it is mine to try and capture them. Each man to his work. If you have to obey the commands of Kabir, I have to obey those of the Nuwâb.'

It may be imagined with what feelings those within the hut listen to this disputation—how they feel the presence of these men, whose hands are almost upon them. The horsemen have placed themselves all round the platform, and the heads of some of the horses are so near the door of the hut that those sitting within can feel their hot breath.

‘As you refuse to let us enter the hut, all I have to do now is to send word to the palace and take care that these people do not get away. We must bivouac here for the night,’ says the leader of the troopers. He then gives the orders to dismount; despatches a couple of men to Khizrabad, and then places a couple of men on sentry at each side of the hut—they are within some six feet of the doorway leading into it. The other men then off-saddle and tether their horses and prepare for the night. They make a huge bonfire, not of course for the sake of the warmth, or for the purpose of cooking—a handful of the parched grain they have brought with them and some water from the well will supply their simple wants—but partly to illumine the spot during the present darkness, and chiefly to give them lights for their hooqas, those hooqas which play so important a part in their lives, the giving or withholding of which is the mark of brotherhood or of social ostracism. The refusal of the hooqah and of water to drink, to a man, is a sign that he is outcast. A man will face death rather than the terrors of that *hooqa pani bund*—‘pipe and water forbidden’—as the sepoys were showing by refusing to use the new cartridge, which would have brought that terrible penalty upon them.

And now the moon is rising, and now mounting upward, and now at the zenith, and now beginning to decline. And her usually delightful presence is to-night marked with as much physical suffering to the fugitives as the flaming presence of the tyrant sun had been. Cool as it is without, it is terribly hot within the hut, more especially during the earlier hours of the night; and that heat is of course added to greatly by their being so many of them within its narrow limits, and the suffering from it enhanced by the tainting of the air to which that overcrowding leads. What their sufferings were like will be understood by those who have read the simple narrative, by one of the survivors, of that terrible night in the Black Hole of Calcutta, a true tale more awful than any feigned story of horror that any poet ever imagined or penned. It is only the open doorway that keeps them

alive. It is only at its open space that they can breathe a life-sustaining and not a life-destroying air. They take it by turns to be near it. They have only the snatches of sleep that utter exhaustion forces upon them. They have to sit on the earthen floor in constrained and irksome postures. No wonder that young Hamilton can hardly resist the temptation to dash out of the place and shift in the open for himself. And they cannot but entertain the dread that the sacred character of the hut and platform may suddenly fail to protect them. Some man, bolder or more bloodthirsty than the rest, may suddenly disregard that sacredness. The floors of sanctuaries, of mosques, and temples, as well as of churches and cathedrals, have often been stained with blood. But the moon mounts up the eastern curve of the heavenly vault and descends the western one, and the horror-laden hours go by. And then from their doorway, which looks east, they can see the sky begin to brighten; and then they watch the blazing morning-star lose its splendour and fade away in the light of the daffodil sky—as I have seen it often from the door of my tent. And, as the light quickens, the range of their vision across the wide-spread barren plain increases. And now what is that upon it? A mass of some kind. And does the range of their vision still continue to increase, or is it that the mass is coming nearer? It must be the latter. It is drawing nearer fast. A herd of cattle? It moves too fast for that. What can it be? Horsemen? Yes! More of the Nuwâb's cavalry? They might come that way, but they would be more likely to come the other.

It has now become necessary for us to follow the movements of Colonel Grey, and so of the Campbells who escaped from Khizrabad with him. We have arrived at the last day of our tale; we must now go back to its fourth day, the day of the outbreak at Khizrabad.

CHAPTER XXXV.

THE LETTER READ.

IN common with the other English families of the cantonment, the Campbells passed the greater part of that fatal day out in the open air, on the Ridge, by the side of the flagstaff-tower. Mrs. Campbell and the little girl pass them, seated in their little carriage; but Dr. Campbell passes them directly in the midst of the flaming

rays of the sun, which have such power to kill, and which were specially inimical to a man of Dr. Campbell's build. There is no little demand on his professional services, and he cannot help moving from carriage to carriage, helping and cheering the poor wives whose husbands are away with their regiments, and, alas! too soon, consoling those whose husbands have been killed. And the sufferings caused by the heat are enhanced by the continually increasing anxiety, by the shock of adverse circumstances. First comes the defection of the 66th and the slaying of the officers, whose wives, too soon widows, are sitting here upon the Ridge. Then comes the explosion of the magazine, which was both seen and heard: for many who had their eyes fixed on the city spread out before them saw the great mass of flame leap up into the air; and the roar was heard of all, and the dense black column of smoke was seen of all. Then comes the return of Colonel Grey, with the news of the closing of the Jumoo Gate behind him: which means the defection of the sepoys and the loss of the guns within it. The superiority of numbers is now entirely on the side of the mutineers, and so Brigadier Moss decides that there is nothing to be done but to get the women and children out of the place as quickly as may be. He determines to retire on Nurnal, a station about thirty miles off, on the Jumoo Road, the road that runs through the cantonment. The order is given. The Grenadiers lead the way: then comes the long array of carriages, and the six companies of the 76th bring up the rear. They descend from the Ridge on to the Jumoo Road, this length of which constitutes, as we know, the Mall. The concourse of vehicles, of many different kinds, on the Mall, the local Rotten Row, of an evening, was one of the sights of the place; but never before had the Mall witnessed such a concourse as this. And now the cavalcade has reached the head of the road leading to the lines of the 76th and trailed slowly by it; but when the leading files of the 76th arrive at the opening they suddenly, and without any word of command given, wheel into it; and now with loud yells and cries the men of the 76th are rushing towards their lines in a disorderly mass, and all the efforts of their officers to stop them are fruitless. This desertion does not arrest, but rather accelerates the progress of the cavalcade, whose rear is so left defenceless. And now it has almost reached the cantonment boundary. The great imperial highway passes very near to the lines of the Grenadiers, and that nearness proves too much for them. They cannot go away and leave all their little belongings,

their pots and pans, and bedding, and clothing, and little store of savings behind them. They follow the example of the 76th. They break their ranks and make a rush for the lines, and soon every individual man is inside his own separate hut. In vain does Colonel Grey, who has, of course, gone with them, cause the 'assembly' to sound. The native officers beg of him, and the other English officers, to go away : they cannot get each sepoy out of his hut, and if they attempt to do so mischief may befall some of them, the regiment might be stained with some further and more unforgivable crime : there are of course some evil characters in it.

There is indeed nothing further to be done. Most of the officers hasten after the retreating cavalcade in which are the wives and children of many of them. And the movements of the cavalcade had been still further accelerated by the defection of the Grenadiers. It has now no protectors at all, behind or before, in front or rear. The retreat has now become a flight. And in that flight took place many a curious, many a tragic, many a comic scene : in it was displayed many an act of heroic generosity, many an act of detestable selfishness. But with these we have nothing to do in the present narrative. None of those whose movements we have undertaken to follow went that way. For Colonel Grey does not mean to leave the station. If he cannot remain with his regiment he will remain near it. He determines to take up his quarters with his friend the Rajah Gunput Rao. But he must go first to the Campbells' bungalow. He has some documents and some cherished memorials there which he should like to take away with him. Just as he is approaching the Campbells' house he finds the Campbells themselves coming away from it. They had gone to it, intending to rejoin the retreating column afterwards, on an errand similar to his own, only to find it in the hands of a mob, which had almost taken their lives. It was only Campbells' good deeds that had saved them. Some of the crowd had stood forward in their defence. One of them, who had the gift of oratory so often to be found among the lower orders in India, and which finds exercise in the meetings of the Panchayuts, had exerted it in their behalf.

'You would not hurt the healer?' he had cried. 'You would not wound the curer of wounds? You would not deprive the saver of life of life? You would not put to death one who has rescued so many of us from death?'

'No, never! That cannot be. We must do good to those who

have done good to us. Assuredly Jan Cammill Sahib and those belonging to him shall suffer no hurt at our hands.' And he led the carriage out of the compound.

'They are plundering the house, they will destroy everything in it,' says Dr. Campbell to Colonel Grey, in a strange, thick, husky voice.

The loss of one's house and furniture is not pleasant to anyone—least of all, perhaps, to a Scotchman. And in this case 'the house and furniture were very valuable, and from the Campbells' long residence here both had come to form a part and portion of their lives, to enter into the texture of it, to an extent not usual with the nomadic Anglo-Indian. But it is not these things that affect John Campbell. It is the loss of his books, of his large collection of notes and memoranda, of his large botanical, and entomological, and other collections. This terrible and unexpected event robs him not only of the past but of the future. He had meant to devote the leisure of his years of retirement to the writing of books, for which these were to furnish the material. And now all that labour of collection had been in vain, and all those visions of future delightful labour and usefulness, and perchance fame, have vanished.

'I shall not go on to Nurnal, but remain here with the Rajah Gunput Rao. You had better come there, too. Our troops from Abdoolapore are sure to be here to-night or to-morrow morning,' says Grey.

'Yes,' says Mrs. Campbell, looking apprehensively at her husband, who seems to be in a kind of daze.

They have reached the Ridge, and the emptiness of the road by the side of the flagstaff-tower, which had been so crowded during all the past midday hours, strikes strangely upon their senses—seems to have a palpable presence. And now they have entered the Ajmere Road, on which the Rajah Gunput Rao's palace stands, and to their surprise—the reader will remember that it passed through a populous suburb near by here—find it, too, empty; but the city has to-day drawn all the surrounding population into it, as a whirlpool sucks in the surrounding particles of water. They have reached the gateway of the Rajah's palace. Colonel Grey is not surprised to find the gate closed, but he is surprised to find that the men on guard refuse to open it to him.

'You know who I am?'

'Oh, yes!'—in an off-hand and not the usually deferential

manner. 'But we have orders not to let anyone in—more especially any Europeans.'

'But I am the Rajah Sahib's friend!'

'Our orders are imperative.'

'You will let him know that I am here.'

'Well, we will do that.'

Then Grey has to remain for a long time standing before the gate; and then to ask them to send up to the house again; and then again. And the evening light is fading away; the cawing crows are flying overhead in flocks, making their way from the city to their distant roosting-grounds; night is at hand. At last the Rajah appears. He is closely followed by two attendants, who not only have sword by side and buckler on back, but carry matchlocks in their hands, while the Rajah himself has a brace of pistols conspicuous in his belt.

'What do you want?' he says rudely, and not hastening eagerly to shake hands, as he would have done yesterday.

'We have come to ask you to put us up for the night.'

'I cannot put you up,' says the Rajah, in the same rude tone of voice.

'Why not?' asks Grey, much surprised.

'*Meree khushi*' ('My pleasure'), says the Rajah grandly.

'And is this your friendship?'

'Friendship! What friendship?' says Gunput Rao scornfully.

'Your friendship toward me.'

'I am a man of royal blood. I have friendship only with nobles and princes. But because of my favourable disposition toward you in past times—what you are pleased to term my friendship—I will give you some good advice. Get away from here as fast as you can, and get down to Calcutta as fast as you can, and then take ship for England as fast as you can.'

'Why for?' (Grey was speaking Hindustani.)

'Because your *raj*' (rule) 'is now over, and ours re-established.'

It would be impossible to convey any idea of the tone of intense satisfaction with which these words are spoken. It is perhaps best, after all, that one nation should not conquer another.

'And I will give you a bit of friendly advice, too,' says Colonel Grey: 'you had better get out of the Company's territory, and hide yourself somewhere as fast as you can.'

He mounts his horse and they move on.

'We may as well keep to this road, and then cross over to the

Jumoo Road by the Goorgaon cross-road,' says Grey. 'It will be almost as short as going back, and more safe.'

And now they arrive at the edge of the huge barren plain over which Colonel Grey and Gunput Rao had ridden in friendly rivalry only so few days before. (They are to meet hereafter in far less friendly rivalry on the plains of Bundelkhand.) And now they enter on the level expanse; and now it seems to spread illimitably around them; and now they have reached its further limit, and once more there are groves and hamlets around them. They are moving across a fertile tract where the lights still twinkle in the villages. And mile succeeds mile, and the road is even, straight and level, and the scenery of a precisely similar character. They have met very few people on the road, and now they meet none at all. It is the dead of night; the moon is riding straight overhead; she is speeding across the sky and they are moving slowly along the road; and so on across fertile tract and barren plain. Then the little mare who has brought them so far so gallantly breaks down suddenly, suddenly collapses altogether. The road is beautifully smooth and level; but the carriage is low, and Dr. Campbell heavy, and the mare slightly built, and she has been in harness for nearly seventeen hours, out all day in the sun, and has not had her usual food or drink. She has now exerted herself almost to the bursting of her heart; she has given them her last ounce of strength; she can proceed now only at a hobbling walk. Dr. Campbell and Mrs. Campbell dismount and walk, Campbell leading the mare, the groom having disappeared. As they can proceed now only at a foot's pace, Grey too dismounts from his horse; he has been nearly twenty hours in the saddle. They wonder that they do not come to the Goorgaon cross-road: they have, in reality, passed it by without knowing it. The moon which was so radiant in the zenith now hangs pallid and wan in the western sky. And now the grey unbroken vault of heaven stands out distinct and clear; now it begins to brighten. The vast level fallow and the groves and trees and villages stand out in hard distinctness. Then suddenly groves and trees and villages disappear, and cease and determine, and they are looking into vacancy. They have arrived at the edge of the great western desert, between which and the Himalayan wall lies the flat open tract between the Jumna and the Sutlej, which forms the portal of the rich Gangetic valley, and the proximity to which, on a rocky elevation, was one of the things that gave Delhi, and Khizrabad

with it, its importance. They move on into the sandy waste for a little way and then resolve to rest—they have nothing to fear in so lonely a spot. The men throw themselves on the ground and sleep there until the first rays of the sun come rushing over the land. Then they move on again. At last they have reached the cross-road, as they imagine, and turn into it. Their progress is now slower than ever, for the road is not a metalled one, but a mere earthen or rather sandy track. And the tyrant sun is bounding upward. The early morning rays of the sun are held to be very dangerous; they strike you under your hat, take you on an empty stomach. There are very empty stomachs here; they feel sick and dizzy, but still they go toiling on. They arrive at a long stretch of sand-hills. The sharp crests and the long, smooth, softly curving intervening hollows make it appear as if the flat sandy desert had been suddenly heaved up into billows. And the road, or track rather, goes straight up and down them, and at one of the rises the mare gives in altogether, and they have to unyoke her and abandon the carriage. The sun's rays grow more powerful every moment; the daily hot wind has begun to blow; the sand rises up in clouds to blind and choke them. The hot air now trembles and quivers and dances upon the surface of the earth as it does over the mouth of a furnace. The glare is awful. And what will the dust be when the wind has attained to greater strength? If the midday hours are terrible even in the midst of the cultivated, grove and tree covered tracts, what will they be here in the sandy desert? Then they rejoice as they see before them trees and a sheet of water; and press eagerly toward them: and find it a mirage. The little girl begins to flag and lag. Her father lifts her up and carries her, first on one shoulder and then on another, though he himself is moving with palpably uncertain, staggering steps.

‘Put her down, John, you cannot carry her,’ cries Mrs. Campbell. ‘She is too heavy for you.’

But he still persists in carrying her: now in his arms and pressed against his breast. The child puts her cheek against his cheek, and he presses her closer to his breast. Then Mrs. Campbell calls out to Colonel Grey, who has been walking ahead:

‘Here is John will carry Helen when he is not able to.’

‘We’ll put her on Musjid’ (his charger); and they do so, and Dr. Campbell walks by the side of the good, noble Arab horse, with his arm behind the child, and he seems to rest a good deal of his weight on that arm. The heat increases even more, and the

simoon blows in even more furious blasts, and raises up even denser clouds of dust. At last they arrive at a long stretch of the thorny bushes which camels are brought to feed on, and they see the promontoried backs and small heads and long necks of some of those ungainly beasts looming up against the sky—and then they come on the men in charge of them. They find from them that they have gone astray altogether. This track leads to Powayn. Powayn is the name of the chief, in fact the only, town of a curious little oasis in the desert, a fertile island in the sea of sand, which forms an independent state, and is at present ruled over by the well-known Ranee of Powayn.

‘How far is Powayn?’

‘Five or six miles.’

‘Would the Ranee Sahib give us shelter?’

‘Most assuredly. Is not the fame of her beneficence spread throughout the universe?’ He sincerely thought it was. ‘We are about to return with our camels. We will conduct you to the palace.’ The big lumbering beasts are got together, and tied nose and tail, and then they set off. When they have passed out of the scrub they come to a stony track, where the heat is, if possible, still greater; and then the track winds between stony hillocks where the heat is even greater still. And then Colonel Grey and Mrs. Campbell utter a loud exclamation. Before them lies a shining lake, across the bottom of which extends the long buttressed wall or dam which holds the water up and gives the lake its existence; while at the top nestles a little stone-built city, and along either side are pretty temples, and bathing ghats, and rows of tall umbrageous trees. They feel as did the Israelites when coming out of the desert they first caught sight of the Promised Land.

‘Send a man for some water,’ says Campbell, in a thick muffled voice; ‘I cannot go any farther without some. I have such a pain in my back. I must sit down.’

And he seats himself in the ineffectual shadow of a neem-tree growing near.

‘What is the matter, John? You are not ill?’ says Mrs Campbell, seating herself by his side.

‘I have such a pain in my back. I must lie down.’

‘You cannot lie down on the ground, it is so hot. Put your head on my lap.’

‘The child! the child! Call her; bring her!’

Colonel Grey lifts the little girl off the horse, and she runs forward and seats herself by her father's side. He casts one long longing look at her; he lifts himself up and utters some uncomprehended words, and then lays himself down again—and is dead. And those three, whom we have seen so lively together, are now together stone still. A new and strange fear and awe has begun to arise within the child, but she has not as yet realised fully what has happened. And for the moment Mrs. Campbell is stricken dumb, petrified with grief and horror and surprise. She had seen that the exposure of the day before had affected her husband greatly, but she had never expected him to be thus struck down—he, the strong man. And then she gives way to her passionate grief; but, in her present weak condition, it is not so passionate as it will be hereafter. The aged, with their enfeebled powers, do not feel sorrow as do the young and strong; and, in the sick chamber, the pain and grief of those in full health by the side of the bed is greater than that of the exhausted sufferer passing away upon it.

Thus died John Campbell, the man of the strong brain and the gentle heart and the skilful hand; thus did his happy and useful and well-lived life come to an end.

The Ranee received and treated them with the utmost kindness. She expressed her deepest sympathy with Mrs. Campbell in her grief. Was she not herself a widow—a widow with an only child? though hers, thank heaven, was a boy, and not a girl. Mrs. Campbell could not have met with greater kindness in the house of her own mother than she met with here. She departed hence deeply impressed with the fact that hearts as gentle and kindly may beat under the simple linen pap-upholders as under the stiffer made and more elaborate corset; under brown skins as under white. And Colonel Grey reflects over the problem—so often presented to us in the history of India—of how women brought up in the confinement, physical and moral and mental, as it seems to us, of the zenana, should come to possess the qualities which enable them to rule the world around them, the world they have never seen. Here was a young woman who had passed from the seclusion of her father's house to the seclusion of her husband's, and who yet administered the affairs of her little kingdom with the utmost prudence and skill. The Ranee presses them to remain with her for a week—for a month; but Colonel Grey has now determined to go to Abdoolapore, the large military centre, and is anxious to get there at once. They bury John Campbell

under a mango-tree by the side of the lake; and, two or three years afterwards, a large block of granite came from his native land to mark the spot. And then on Thursday morning—that is to say, about two o'clock in the morning—they start for Abdoolapore in the Ranee's palanquins, and guarded by her cavalry; and, resting during the heat of the day in the house of a zemindar, a connection of the Ranee's, they reach Abdoolapore late in the afternoon. Colonel Grey proceeds at once to the house of the Brigadier, in order to make his arrival known to him; Mrs. Campbell and the little girl being carried off to the late empty barrack, in which so many of the ladies of the station have now found a temporary home. The fat old gentleman receives Grey in his office—the room is a very cool one. Grey is the first man who has arrived from Khizrabad to give an account of all that had happened there—to give an account of those sad and terrible and memorable and historical events. He cannot but be excited in narrating them: but he produces no excitement in his listener. The old man's indifference is so great that Grey's indignation and disgust are swallowed up in astonishment. When Grey tells of the blowing up of the arsenal, the old gentleman says it must have made a great noise!—that is all. The only time he shows a little excitement is when Grey dwells, all the more strongly because of the old fellow's apathy, on the fact of the events of that day at Khizrabad having been governed by the continual expectation of the arrival of the English troops from here—Abdoolapore.

'Nonsense!' says the old man. 'English troops cannot be sent out without tents and proper commissariat arrangements in such weather as this. They cannot be sent out under canvas at all. And I have to dress now, Grey; and you must send me an official report; and come and dine, and you can tell me more about it then.'

As Grey jumps up angrily from his seat, he knocks over the waste-paper basket. As he is picking up the bits of paper from the floor and putting them back, one of them catches his eye.

'Why, this is Fane's handwriting.'

'It is the bit of paper the spy had on him. He pretended it was English, and it is not.'

'No; it is French.'

'A filthy piece of Hindostanee paper. He must have thought me very green.'

'May I read it, sir?'

‘If you like—if you can. I must go now.’ And the old man, having risen from his chair with some difficulty, begins to toddle towards the door of the room.

‘It is stated in this piece of paper,’ says Grey, impressively, ‘that three English ladies and four English officers are in hiding not far from here, and ask for help.’

‘Nonsense, nonsense!’ cries the old man—he had had his afternoon sleep, and was impatient for his evening drive. ‘A filthy piece of Hindostanee paper—chuck it back into the basket. Will see you at dinner.’

‘What has become, sir, of the man who brought the paper?’

‘Is in confinement; is to be tried to-morrow by court-martial; will probably be hung. Most villainous-looking rascal.’

‘May I go and see him, sir?’

‘Certainly, if you like; go at once,’ says the old man, impatient to be rid of him.

Grey does go at once, and learns the particulars of the case from the young disciple, who has so nearly lost his life in carrying out his teacher’s commands. He gets back to the Brigadier’s house just as the old man has come back from his drive, and is having his usual glass of sherry and bitters, and states what he has heard; gives it as his opinion that the man is telling the truth, and that the paper has come from some fugitives from Khizrabad. He has no doubt that the handwriting is that of Fane, and the three ladies may be his wife and daughters.

‘Very good, the handwriting is that of Fane; and yet you said that you thought that he must have been blown up in the arsenal. Pooh-pooh! the fellow is lying; he looks a scoundrel. It is some dodge, some ruse.’

Grey’s proposition that a small body of troops should be sent out with the messenger to bring these English people in—at all events to see whether they are there or not—is met with a decided refusal. The Brigadier has not been able to send any troops out of the place, and is not able to do so now; for this unanswerable reason: if he sends out a force of such strength that it will satisfy him of its power to defend itself, then he will endanger the garrison here; and if he keeps a sufficient number of men in the garrison to make it secure, why then he cannot send out a force of such strength as will satisfy him of its power to defend itself. From that position nothing will move him. Grey’s arguments and remonstrances, carried far beyond the limits of military sub-

ordination, are all in vain ; and now dinner is announced. But Grey gets away immediately after it. He has heard that a number of the civilians of the place have formed themselves into a body of volunteer cavalry. He goes to the man in immediate command of it, and lays the case before him. Certainly, these English people must be at the faquir's hut, and an effort must be made to bring them in. His volunteers will go out fast enough, but he must obtain the permission of the 'magistrate and collector' under whose supreme command the volunteers are. Certainly ; the magistrate and collector is a man the very antipodes of the Brigadier, against whom he is furious ; his own authority is paralysed by the fat old man's supineness. Certainly ; the volunteer cavalry shall go out, and he himself will accompany it with some of his mounted policemen. But all this has taken time, and it is not until about four o'clock in the morning that the little troop of horsemen ride forth on their plucky mission.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

THE EIGHTH DAY. AND BEYOND.

THOSE on whose behalf the gallant little band had ridden forth had observed, in the early dawn of the morning, from the door of the hut, whose sacred character, which might or might not continue to be respected, formed their only protection, a mass of some kind appear on the level expanse of the open plain before them. What is it ? A herd of cattle ? No, it moves too high for that.

'It is a troop of horsemen,' says Major Coote. But their eager eyes do not discern the well-known uniform of the crack cavalry regiment at Abdoolapore. Surely it cannot be another band of the Nuwâb's troopers. For now there is a sudden commotion among the men of the band already here, a sudden calling to one another and awakening of one another, and the leader shouts out, 'Saddle, saddle !' and there is a quick saddling of the horses. Fane and Hay, looking out at the door of the hut, have to relate what is going on to the poor half-sick, half-stified people within.

'Yes, they are horsemen, and coming from the direction of Abdoolapore.'

'The fellows here are saddling and mounting.'

In the East the horses of the sun gallop fast. The dim light over the plain has given place to a clear white brightness. The

changes from light to darkness and from darkness to light at the end and beginning of the day are very swift. If in the evening it is like the sudden dropping of a curtain, in the morning it is like the sudden raising of one. Or to go back to the original simile, which arose so naturally in the East, if the chariot goes rushing away from you very fast of an evening, it comes rushing toward you very fast of a morning. The light upon the plain is now vivid, quite sufficient for purposes of clearest vision: very soon it will be too much in excess for that.

‘Feringhees!’ shout the Nuwâb’s horsemen.

‘Oh! Ah! Haw!’ says Major Fane, at the door of the hut.

‘I thank Thee, O my God!’ Hay thinks that the fervent thanksgiving has risen up only in his heart; he does not know that he has uttered it aloud with his lips.

‘I can see solah-hats. They are Englishmen!’ yells young Hamilton.

Mrs. Fane’s thoughts and feelings have always been of a firm and clear and determinate character, but at this moment they are very much blurred and confused. For a very unmistakable English ‘hurrah!’ has penetrated into the innermost recesses of the hut, and there is the sound of the galloping of horses, of the discharge of firearms. And Hay rushes out of the hut, and leaps over the little monkey-gods, who protect the faquir’s hut as effectually as his tallest grenadiers guard the palace of the Czar, and Hamilton follows him. And what they see is the Nuwâb’s horsemen galloping away and the other body of horsemen pursuing them. And then they see the latter returning, and Fane and Coote have joined them, and now there is a great interchange of cheers and then a great shaking of hands.

‘You here, Grey!’ cries Coote. ‘Did your fellows mutiny too?’

‘Well, no—not quite. But we will talk about that another time. Why, we thought you were blown up with your arsenal, Fane.’

And then Mrs. Fane and her daughters are tenderly helped out. And the hearts of their rescuers are deeply moved within them, for they can see from their looks, from the condition of their arms and necks and shoulders and faces, how terribly they must have suffered—see and know fully what I have been able but inadequately to describe or convey. They can see that it is torture to poor Lilian to put her blistered feet to the ground.

She cannot now walk. They must get some means of conveyance for her. Some of them are thinking of riding back to a village they passed on the way to see if they can find a vehicle there, when a little cart is seen moving along the track. They take possession of this—requisition it. It is a miserable little springless cart, but still it must do. It certainly is torture sitting in it on the unmade track, but luckily they soon arrive at a smooth metalled road.

The rescued ones load the Byragee with thanks as they take leave of him, and they ask what they can do for him hereafter.

‘Nothing,’ says the holy man. ‘I have no desires—no wants.’

‘But you have laid us all under such great obligation to you,’ says Hay fervently, glancing toward Beatrice, ‘that we should like to be able to exhibit our gratitude in some way.’

‘Nay,’ said the Kabirpanthi, ‘the obligation is all on my side. You have afforded me the chance of saving seven most precious human lives. How can I repay you for that? I rejoice only to be able to assuage thirst. To save a human life—what honour, what glory, what joy!’

‘But it would be a great pleasure to us to know in what way we could give you any pleasure,’ says Hay, earnestly.

‘Well,’ says the self-made recluse, ‘I see that in the months to come there will be much shedding of human blood. Alas! alas! If you will let one man live in my name I shall be amply repaid for all I have done for you.’

It can easily be imagined what a reception the fugitives met with from their fellow-countrymen in Abdoolapore. They were overwhelmed with offers of assistance. They had arrived in the place clotheless, homeless, penniless. Money; house accommodation, such as there is; clothes, such as will fit them—are all soon at their command. It will be understood with what triumph and joy his fellow-countrymen welcomed Major Fane, who had done the great deed that was to stand out as one of the greatest deeds of the time. Congratulations and felicitations flow in upon him, so that his ‘oh! ah!’ and ‘hah!’ are in constant requisition. ‘Glad to see you, Fane,’ says the fat old Brigadier. ‘Could not spare any troops to send out for you, but glad to see you. Come and dine.’

It will be understood with what grateful hearts they lay down to sleep that night, how fervent was Hay’s thanksgiving ere he did so.

Our eighth day has ended. But we must go on a little

further. The terrible exposure to the sun, and the privations and fatigue and anxiety she had undergone, threw Mrs. Fane into a fever from which she did not recover for a long while; and Lilian suffered greatly from her torn and cut feet, and could not stand on them for many months; and Beatrice nursed them both. And many others. Many of the English soldiers suffered from various illnesses during the terrible summer and autumn months, and many were wounded in excursions. (The old Brigadier soon applied for sick leave to the hills, which was cheerfully granted him; and his successor was a very different kind of man.) And in every gathering of English women and children in Northern India then there was sure to be a daily increasing number of widows and orphans. And Beatrice Fane devoted herself to the assuagement of the bodily and mental sufferings of all. She tended the sick and wounded, she consoled the afflicted, the dying. With her slender, beautiful figure and her lovely face, her sweet voice, her tender, gentle ways, she seemed like some angelic being, and came to be called the 'ministering angel.' Taking up too crowded a field of incident, I have not been able to make the characters properly known to the reader by their own speech as I should like to have done. Most especially do I regret this lost opportunity in the case of Beatrice Fane, with her firm and strong, lofty and noble, and yet sweet and gentle character. Then Mrs. Fane and her daughters had to go through a long period of anxiety on their own account. Major Fane and Hay both went to Delhi to take part in its famous siege. (Hay's fears for the loss of his arm had not been unfounded. He had, in fact, run a close risk of losing his life; but medical help came in time, if only just in time, and his excellent unimpaired constitution enabled him soon to recover.) They both greatly distinguished themselves there. When the time came for the delivery of the final assault, and our batteries were being thrown up close under the walls, Fane especially distinguished himself by the coolness with which he, standing unconcerned in the midst of a storm of shell, directed the carrying on of the work in his battery, the furthest advanced and most important one—directed it with a bamboo stick, which was the successor of the Malacca cane, the loss of which represented the only personal damage he had sustained in the famous blowing up of the Khizrabad magazine. Hay threw himself heart and soul into the fight. He was actuated, no doubt, like anyone else, by a desire for personal distinction: he entertained, no doubt, as

was natural to one in his position, a strong resentment against the mutinous sepoys. But he threw himself with all his soul into the fight because he thought it was a righteous one. Each side, of course, thought its own cause a righteous one. But the sepoys had stained their cause with blood. The land rang with horrors. Their hands were red with the blood of women and children. He was fighting against the heathen: he was fighting on the side of the Cross. And so by next year Fane was Colonel Fane, V.C., C.B.; and Hay had made a still bigger jump, and was Colonel Hay, V.C., C.B., and had command of one of the new crack Sikh infantry regiments.

And Hay, who had declared that he could not have his marriage deferred to the December of this year, had to wait until the December of next year. And he and Beatrice Fane were married, as they would rather not have been, in the church at Khizrabad, for Colonel Fane was stationed there again. Perhaps elsewhere the marriage might have been a larger one. In the joy of her heart—the marriage satisfied her now in every way—Mrs. Fane might have insisted on its being a big, gay affair. But in a place so haunted by sad memories as this it could only be a very simple and quiet one. The ‘whole station’ cannot be present at it, as would have been the case had it taken place, as intended, in the July of the preceding year. Besides the members of the family and Hay’s friend, who acts as best man—poor Philip Lennox was to have filled the post—there are only four or five other people, chiefly relations, present. And Lilian is the only bridesmaid who follows Beatrice Fane to the altar.

After lying under its walls for many weary, anxious months, the English force had carried Khizrabad by storm, and then came a day of reckoning for its inhabitants, a day of retribution for the denizens of the Devil’s Quarter. The streets did not run with blood, as they had on the occasion of many a previous sack, for the little force had not been able to make any sort of investment of the great city; had taken a whole day to effect a lodgment in it; and while it was slowly winning its way in from the Jummoo Gate, the one assaulted, the inhabitants had been fleeing forth from the other gateways. When this force had passed on, leaving only a small garrison behind, it was strange to wander through the silent and deserted city—to pass from empty and silent squares, once so thronged and bustling, into empty and silent streets; into silent and empty alleys; into private courtyards,

now vacant, which seemed the very ultimate abode of silence; and where the sense of loneliness was most oppressive. It was strange to pass the long rows of deserted houses, in which no light now shone of an evening, and the sound of the grindstone was not heard of a morning. The dead bodies of men and animals lay about, and the cats who had fed on them had grown to a monstrous size.

How the members of the royal family fled from the palace-fortress and took refuge in a mausoleum without the town; how the Nuwâb delivered himself up with the whole of his family; how he was tried for life, are matters of history. There was no proof of the Nuwâb's connection with any of the deeds of butchery. The massacre in the palace was one of the crimes of which the fullest details had been obtained. Most of those concerned in it, including the ruffianly butcher, were captured—the search for them was very keen—and suffered the dreadful penalty of being blown away from guns. Some of them had said that they understood that the order for the massacre had come from the Nuwâb or the Sikunder Begum, but their testimony also went to show that it was the eunuch, Jhundoo Khan, who had actually hired them for the crime and paid them for it. And the eunuch had disappeared, and with him the forged warrant that might have cost the Nuwâb his life. The Sikunder Begum had been seen in her balcony, but her apartment overlooked the courtyard, and her presence there might have been accidental. The Nuwâb was stripped of all his titles and dignities, his income greatly reduced, and he and his family were transported from the banks of the Jumna, on which his ancestors had been seated for so many centuries, to the alien banks of the Irawaddy. The Sikunder Begum, of course, went with him. If the English officials, who felt a strong conviction that it was the Begum who had ordered the massacre in the palace, had obtained legal proof of her guilt, they could not have inflicted greater punishment upon her than this banishment did. They could not have ordered her solitary confinement for life and torture which that banishment entailed upon her. She had not undergone it for long, when she came to think that a violent, even an ignominious death at Khizrabad would have been preferable. She had been delivered into the hands of her deadliest enemies; she had embittered the lives of the senior wives of the Nuwâb, and it was now their turn to embitter hers. She had supplanted them.

She had wounded their pride, their vanity. She had wounded them in their affections. She had humiliated them. And now she was cast down beneath their feet. They had now the power to torture her, and they used it to the utmost. Was it not she who had brought about the downfall of the ancient house of Khizrabad, of one of the great powers of the Faith? Was she not to be execrated of every one connected with that household, of every good Mahomedan? It was right and proper for them to entertain the bitterest hatred of her. Had she not caused this terrible change in the fortunes of them all? Had she not wrought their woe? Was it not she who had brought them to this—hither? Every trouble and inconvenience which they experienced by reason of the change of clime and fortune was charged upon her, and she was made to pay a penalty for it. Did a child die, of course because of the alien clime, its mother came and raved at the Sikunder Begum, and cursed her and reviled her. The wretched woman was delivered over entirely into the hands of her enemies and persecutors. To an appeal to the Nuwâb the answer came, not only that he could not see her, but that, as complete peace of mind was absolutely essential to his bodily health, he had been obliged to issue stringent orders that no communication from her should ever be brought to him, nor any mention ever made of her name; at the same time he sent her some neatly turned verses, in which there was an enumeration of his misfortunes, which were all attributed to her, and an allusion to the danger of warming a viper in one's bosom was not forgotten.

And so reproach and execration, scorn and contumely, became the Begum's daily portion. There was now none so poor to do her reverence. The servants of the house could best show their regard for it by treating her with disrespect. The malignity of the whole place, of every person in it, found vent on her. No face was turned toward her with kindness. It was a terrible situation.

And the Begum felt her bodily discomforts and sufferings as keenly as the laceration of her feelings. Very different these two meanly furnished rooms allotted to her and her children from her splendid suite of apartments in the palace of Khizrabad; very different this close room, with its coarse and scanty appointments—she felt that coarseness keenly—from the beautiful and airy chamber that had looked down on the valley of the Jumna.

and over many a league beyond ; she felt stifled in this one—her helpless confinement in it caused her as much physical as mental suffering. She had been fond of good food and of pleasant drinks : her food now was poor of quality, such as was disagreeable to her and disagreed with her, undaintily served, often scanty in quantity ; and if she complained of the water supplied her to drink she was told that it was she who had brought them here, to this terrible place, where the air and the water both were uncongenial and inimical to them all.

The Begum had loved luxury and ease. And now she had neither. The care of her children was left on her hands. The domestics rendered her, and hers, only grudging and insolent service. And the Begum was haunted by the memory, the torturing memory, not of any crime, but what to her was worse, of a failure. Most torturing must be the memory of some one single lapse or failure, moral or intellectual, or, as in her case, of some one unguarded-against event or circumstance, which renders nugatory the labour and forethought of years, and mars one's life. At Khizrabad she had thought that she made her own life unassailable. In her coffer lay a little packet, of a purposed littleness, which yet within its little compass contained that which gave her the command over fate and made her future secure. The gems within it would afford her the means of living in affluence, she and her children, wherever she went. She knew that, should that blow against the English fail, the Nuwâb's household would be no place for her. She would part from it and begin a new life elsewhere. On the day of the storm of Khizrabad she had urged on the defence, delayed the flight from the palace to the latest. But the moment of the flight came. There came an hour of wild disorder and confusion. First, the Begum arranged for the departure of her children : there was a rush and scramble for the means of conveyance. Then she returned from that end of her secluded suite of apartments to her own special chamber. At the door she had met Hiria, the slave-girl, rushing away. 'Stop! you black-faced witch!' she had cried out to her, but the girl had only turned and given her a mocking look—how that look came to haunt her—and had fled headlong down the staircase. 'The daughter of a pig!' the Begum had exclaimed. 'How frightened they all are!' she had added, contemptuously. Entering the beautiful chamber, she had passed round the dais to her strong box. She had uttered a cry—those were moments never to be forgotten—when she saw that its lid stood open. She had dashed her hands down into the

chest, she had thrown out all that was in it, and then she had fallen back against the daïs with a shriek—the precious packet was gone! Her hoarded power, her garnered security was gone. The slave-girl had stolen the packet. Never should she see it again; and never did she see it again. Foiled!—foiled by her whom she had so often called Fool—Dolt—Addle-pate—Donkey—Owl—Idiot! The Idiot had taken ample revenge for all the sufferings the Begum had inflicted upon her. She had repaid torture with torture. When the Begum recalled that look, she could have yelled out in her rage and anguish.

The Begum lost her health and beauty. She became gaunt and haggard. Her cheeks became very hollow, and her fine aquiline nose stood out from her face like the beak of an eagle. She was tortured through that darling son whom she had hoped to place upon the throne of Khizrabad. He was still of an age that he had to pass most of his time within the limits of the zenana. It was made a hell to him. An English home is narrow enough for much misery. If within the closer confinement, the cloistered retirement, of the zenana domestic happiness may rise to a celestial height, it is there that domestic misery may become of an infernal character. Every kind of torment was heaped upon the lad unsparingly, unrelentingly. His young life was made a burden to him. At last he said to his mother, ‘I cannot be happy until you are dead.’ Then she would die. So, one day, when the female attendants of the zenana heard the most agonising shrieks and cries issuing from the Begum’s apartment, and rushed into it, they found her writhing in the torments of the virulent poison she had swallowed. That eve, upon the coarse blanket of the mean bedstead, terribly twisted and contorted, lay the once beautiful form which we had seen stretched in luxurious ease and abandonment upon the costly coverlet of the silver-legged daïs in the beautiful marble chamber of the palace of Khizrabad but a few years before.

The Nuwâb bewailed his lot in verses of many forms (and shapes)—surely the poets love to push the envenomed arrow home, to sip of the poisoned draught: they must find some satisfaction in the misfortunes which afford them the occasion for melodious mourning. But he grew fat and lived to an extreme old age.

We must go on a little further yet.

Thirty years have passed. The year 1887 dawns on British India even more gloriously than 1857. The January sun of 1857 had looked down on the dominions of the Honourable East

India Company. The January sun of 1887 looks down on the empire of Victoria, Queen of England and Empress of India. It looks down on a great empire greatly administered. It looks down on a changed and transformed India—on a new India. It looks down on great changes—great improvements, for great canals and railways now traverse the land; the railroad and telegraph have annulled its vast intervening distances. It looks down on fine new cities—on the old ones made sweeter and brighter. It looks down on innumerable schools and colleges—on a new generation of educated natives: the stream of human learning which for so many generations had flowed backward and forward between Europe and Western Asia has now reached further from west to east and is flowing in full tide into India. It looks down on a people among whom has been an enormous diffusion of wealth—an enormous increase in the comforts of life. It looks down on a land in which peace and security, order and quiet, law and justice prevail in an eminent degree.

In Khizrabad the change that has taken place all over the land is epitomised. Not only great roads, but railways now radiate from it. The place of the old bridge-of-boats has been taken by a fine iron-girder bridge, one of that splendid series of bridges which now span almost all the rivers in India—even the greatest, even the lower Indus, and even the Ganges at Benares. The foul back slums and fetid alleys have been opened out and cleansed. Improved sanitation has caused the complete disappearance of many loathsome and torturing diseases. Star Street glitters more brightly than ever—glitters with its own gay, bright, indigenous wares; for if once we inflicted injury on some of the handicraftsmen of India by the introduction of our own manufactures (which was greatly to the benefit of the rest of the community), we have long since recompensed it tenfold, for the handicraftsmen of that land have had such employment during the past twenty years as was never known there before.

The ancient splendour of the renowned castle or palace-fortress of Khizrabad has passed away with its ancient use: it is now occupied by a regiment of English soldiers. But be it remembered that it was solely owing to the English that the royal family of Khizrabad had been able to occupy the palace and retain it for its ancient use for the half-century preceding their final removal from it. Instead of the Nuwâbs, a municipal council, composed chiefly of natives, now governs Khizrabad. It holds its meetings in a splendid town hall, attached to which is a lofty clock-tower,

since the completion of which the old historical gong above the main gateway of the palace has ceased to ring forth the hours as it had done for so many hundred years before.

The Ghilāni Bagh has been greatly improved. You see natives strolling about in it as you did not do of yore, and in some of the finest equipages on the Mall you see natives sitting, though not yet with their wives.

And Khizrabad, as Delhi, has been affected by one great public change—a most important and historical change. We have said that the ancient importance of Khizrabad, as Delhi, was due to its standing at the highest point of the navigation of the Jumna, where a rocky ridge impinged on the river and allowed of a strong fortress being built; of its standing at one end of the flat open tract between the Sutlej and the Jumna, which was bounded by the stupendous wall of the Himalayas on one side and the wide wastes of the sandy desert on the other, and which formed the ancient portal or gateway into India. That portal has now been removed further westward; has been placed on the top of the great mountain chain that forms the western boundary of Hindostan.

The gun by the side of the flagstaff-tower on the Ridge has sent forth its morning roar. The Hindoos of the town are flocking down to the river to bathe. The English people are on the move, driving about on business or pleasure. The doctor goes to visit his patients, the engineer his works. The commanding officers of the various regiments—there are Sikh ones here now—and the brigadier, and the commissioner, and the civil surgeon, and the chaplain, and the manager of the bank, and the other prominent residents of the place are to be seen in the Ghilani Bagh this morning, as we saw them on that morning in May thirty years ago. We pace the streets that others have paced before us and others will pace after us. Ghost follows ghost. And that corner of the gardens where the watercourse makes a beautiful sweep through the little wood of the ancestral banian-tree, and where we saw the English girls assembled together that morning, is still the place of favourite resort. We can note no change here except the typical one of an iron garden-seat having taken the place of the old wooden bench. There are two ladies on the seat. The young girl with the bright and blue-eyed face bears a strong resemblance to the Lilian Fane who formed one of that group of girls, as well she may, being indeed her daughter; and the pale but pretty middle-aged lady by her side is her mother, the Lilian Fane of old, but of course now

Lilian Fane no longer. Her husband, Colonel Leslie, is now the Commissioner here—Khizrabad, like Delhi, was placed under the Punjab Government after the Mutiny—and Mrs. Leslie now lives in Melvil Hall. And the daughter who is now with her (she has several others, two of them married; she is, in fact, a grandmother) arrived from England only two days ago, and though she has, of course, heard the story of her mother's escape from Khizrabad, she has not heard it yet in fullest detail from her mother's lips. And Mrs. Leslie tells it to her now, seated here in the shadow of the banian-tree. She tells her how they were gathered together in this spot to settle the dresses they were to wear on the occasion of Aunt Beatrice's wedding, and how the cobra appeared and grandpapa killed it; and of the terrible day of the outbreak, and how they escaped to the Jummo Gate, and how, seeing some of their own light summer dresses lying there on the ground, and, picking one up, she saw under it the dead body of a young officer she knew very well and liked very much ('Poor fellow! he was only a boy: everyone called him Tommy Walton: I can see his face now,' says Mrs. Leslie with a shudder); and how they were let down the wall, and the difficulty they had in crossing the ditch, and all that happened afterwards; and how they wandered about for three days and underwent terrible sufferings; told her own part of the tale that I have told to you.

The events of that time are graven very deeply on the minds of all who witnessed them. Reviewing my own work, I think they are graven too deeply for the purposes of fiction. You can manipulate fictitious events and characters as you will. You can make the events mould or bring out character, the character produce and bring about events. You can give the due proportion of space to the delineation of character or the narration of events. But in dealing with the real adventures of real people you are apt to forget that the characters of the actors are not as well known to the reader as to yourself, and every occurrence will insist upon being narrated exactly as it happened and at full length. You are apt to be overpowered with incident. The writer should dominate his events; but the events of the Indian Mutiny are sure to dominate the narrator. (We see this in every history of it as yet published.) But I have told the tale as best I could. Let the reader judge it leniently.

THE END.

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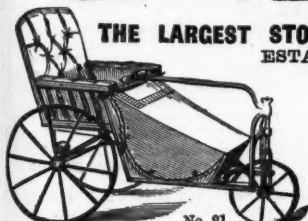
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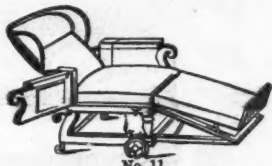
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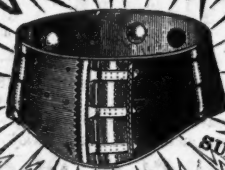
JUNE 1891.

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JEOPARDY OF LIFE.—THE GREAT DANGER OF VITIATED AIR.

How few know that after breathing impure air for two and a half minutes every drop of blood is more or less poisoned. There is not a point in the human frame but has been traversed by poisoned blood, not a point but must have suffered injury.

ENO'S 'FRUIT SALT'

Is the best remedy. It removes fetid or poisonous matter (the groundwork of disease) from the blood by natural means, allays nervous excitement, depression, and restores the nervous system to its proper condition. Use ENO'S 'FRUIT SALT.' It is pleasant, cooling, refreshing, and invigorating. You cannot overstate its great value in keeping the blood pure and free from disease.

ENO'S 'FRUIT SALT.'—From the Rev. Dr. HUNTER, Vicar of Collierly.—'I have used your "FRUIT SALT" for many years, and have verified your statements. The thanks of the public are due to you for your unceasing efforts to relieve suffering humanity. Long may you live to be a blessing to the world.'

CAUTION.—Examine each Bottle, and see that the Capsule is marked ENO'S 'FRUIT SALT.' Without it, you have been imposed on by a worthless imitation. Sold by all Chemists. Prepared only at

ENO'S 'FRUIT SALT' WORKS, POMEROY STREET, NEW CROSS ROAD, LONDON, S.E.

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And 497 Branches
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"BY a thorough knowledge of the natural laws which govern the operations of digestion and nutrition, and by a careful application of the fine properties of well-selected Cocoa, Mr. EPPS has provided our breakfast-tables with a delicately-flavoured beverage which may save us many heavy doctors' bills. It is by the judicious use of such articles of diet that a

EPPS'S (GRATEFUL, COMFORTING) COCOA

constitution may be gradually built up until strong enough to resist every tendency to disease. Hundreds of subtle maladies are floating around us ready to attack wherever there is a weak point. We may escape many a fatal shaft by keeping ourselves well fortified with pure blood and a properly nourished frame."—*The Civil Service Gazette.*

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*NOTICE.—The publication of the JULY
NUMBER of the "CORNHILL MAGAZINE"
will be deferred until the 2nd of July, in
order to obtain Copyright in America for A
NEW SERIAL STORY entitled "THE NEW
RECTOR," by Stanley J. Weyman, Author of
"The House of the Wolf" &c., which will be
commenced in that number.*

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For Notice to Correspondents see overleaf.

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(REGISTERED TRADE MARK)

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Each Tablet in Card Case.

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Every MS. should bear the Name and Address of the Sender.

All Contributions are attentively considered, and unaccepted MSS. are returned on receipt of stamps for postage; but the Editor cannot hold himself responsible for any accidental loss. MSS. cannot be delivered on personal application, nor can they be forwarded through the post when only initials are given.

Contributions should be legibly written, and only on one side of each leaf.

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GENERAL

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£338,526.

ASSURANCE FUND,
£2,890,675.

BONUS YEAR 1890-1.

*The Thirteenth Bonus will
be declared in January 1892.
Profit Assurances effected prior
to June 30 1891 will share.*

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Every Policy now issued is

**WHOLE-WORLD,
UNCONDITIONAL AND UNCHALLENGEABLE.**

Bonus Year 1890-1.

THE THIRTEENTH QUINQUENNIAL BONUS will be declared in January 1892. Profit Policies effected **now** or before the end of June will share, although one Premium only will have been paid.

At the last Division, the Surplus divided was **£375,000**, an amount larger by **£30,000** than any previously distributed.

The sum added to Policies was **£440,035**, being equal on the average to 56 per cent. on the Premiums received on them in the Quinquennium, while the **Cash Bonus** amounted to **33½ per cent.**, *i.e.*, more than a third, of all the payments in the five years.

The Prospects of the coming Bonus

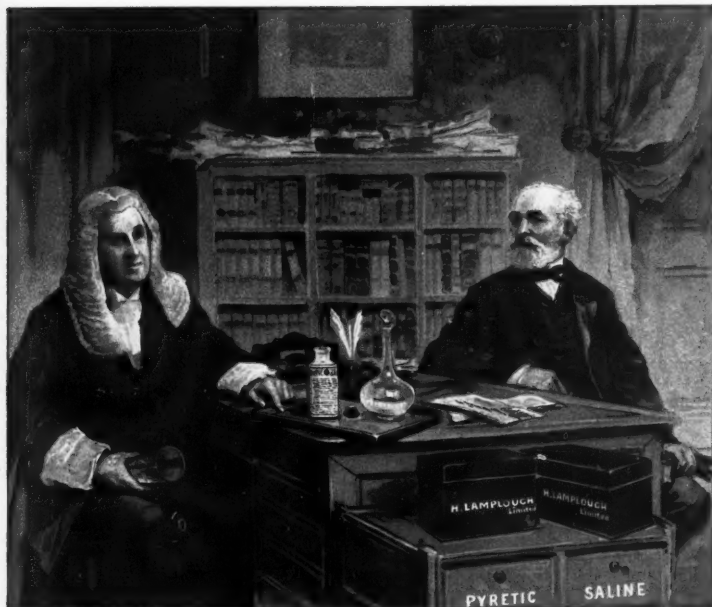
are highly satisfactory. Indeed, the growth of the Society in magnitude and wealth justifies the expectation of a **DISTRIBUTION OF PROFIT IN 1892**, at least as good as that of 1887.

Papers and every Information on Application.

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November 1890.

B. NEWBATT,
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COUNSEL'S OPINION.



MR LAMPOUGH —“Well Sir, in your opinion, have I said more for my **PYRETIC SALINE** than its merits deserve?”

LEADING Q.C. —“No Sir you have not. — It is my deliberate opinion, after many years experience, that for keeping the body in health, the head cool, and the mind clear there is nothing to be compared with

LAMPOUGH'S PYRETIC SALINE.”

THIS INVALUABLE PREPARATION OF OVER FIFTY YEARS STANDING MAY BE HAD OF ALL CHEMISTS EVERYWHERE.

A FEW TESTIMONIALS OUT OF MANY THOUSANDS.

GRAND HOTEL, MANCHESTER,

March 7th, 1888

Dear Sirs,

MADAME MARIE ROZE desires me to say that she recognises in your preparation the precious Saline that she found so valuable when she visited New Orleans during the last Yellow Fever epidemic. Madame Roze was advised by Dr. BARNES, of London, to take your Saline with her, and we took several dozen bottles, and I really believe IT SAVED OUR LIVES! Having forgotten the name "LAMPLOUGH," we have frequently asked for effervescing magnesia and similar preparations, but failed to obtain anything equal to your preparation, and we are very pleased to be again provided with the very article we have been anxious to obtain for years.

Yours faithfully,

H. MAPLESON, COLONEL.

Dr. W. STEVENS says:—"Since its introduction the fatal West India fevers are deprived of their terror."

Dr. ALEX. MILNE:—"Its utility as a remedy in fevers, and as a cooling drink in diseases of children, such as Scarlet Fever, Measles, &c., has been testified to by the leading members of the profession. I prescribe it frequently, &c."

Captain STEWART STEPHENS, Gold Coast Houssa Force:—"I have used your Saline with undoubtedly good effect in India, Natal, and Zululand, where I have found its constant use as nearly as possible the only preventive against the malarious fever, which probably is the worst in the world."

Rev. D. EVANS writes, December, 1887:—"My second daughter has been suffering for a long time from GENERAL DEBILITY, LANGUOR, AND LOSS OF APPETITE; but since she has been taking your Pyretic Saline she has improved wonderfully."

Mr. YOUNG writes under date October 12th, 1886: "For something like fifteen years I have constantly taken your Pyretic Saline, that is to say, every morning. During the whole of that time I have NEVER TAKEN ANY OTHER MEDICINE, nor have I had a doctor. I have also given it to my children, and to it I attribute the fact that I have never had to call in a doctor for them since they were born."

THE MISSING ODE OF ANACREON!!!

The earth was in gloom and the sky was o'ercast;
The storm and the rain cloud were gathering fast;
The gods in Olympus were heavy with wine
Till Jupiter called for "Pyretic Saline."

The bright flashing goblet the Thunderer quaffed,
And glad shone the sun on the earth as he laughed,
"Ho sunshine and youth shall for ever be mine,
"For the essence of life is 'Pyretic Saline.'"

He gazed on the myriads toiling below,
And prophetic he spake, "This Celestial flow
"Shall some day be known, now a secret divine,
"To mortals as 'Lamplough's Pyretic Saline.'"

May be had of ALL CHEMISTS throughout the world, or of the Manufacturers

HENRY LAMPLOUGH, Limited,

113, HOLBORN; 9a, OLD BROAD STREET; and 42, FENCHURCH STREET,
LONDON, E.C.



RIZINE

and how to prepare it



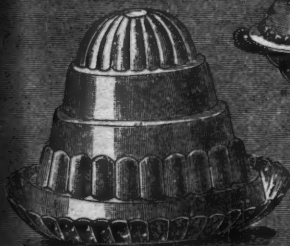
1. Boiled Pudding.



2, 3 & 4. RIZINE Pudding
baked.



5. RIZINE & Jam Pudding.



6. Lardon Blanc Mange.



7. Gateau
de RIZINE.



8. RIZINE Cake.



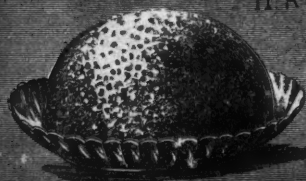
9. Cheese Souffle.



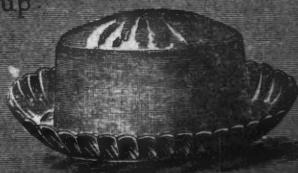
10. Cheese Cakes.



11. RIZINE Soup.



12. RIZINE Pudding & Dried fruit.



13. RIZINE Sponge Cake.

For Detailed Recipes see other Side.

RIZINE

RECIPES.

(FOR ILLUSTRATIONS OF DISHES SEE OTHER SIDE.)

1. RIZINE PUDDING, Plain Boiled.

Ingredients—Half pound Rizine. Mode: Tie the Rizine in a pudding-cloth, allowing room for the Rizine to swell, and put into a saucepan of cold water; boil it gently for 20 minutes, and if, after a time, the cloth seems tied too loosely, take the Rizine up and tighten the cloth. Serve with sweet melted butter, or cold butter and sugar, or stewed fruit, jam or marmalade, any of which accompaniments are suitable for plain boiled Rizine.

2. PLAIN RIZINE PUDDING, Baked.

Three to four ozs. of Rizine to a pint and a-half of milk, 2 tablespoonfuls of sugar, and the rind of a lemon rubbed on a lump of sugar, stir the whole well together and bake half-an-hour.

3. BAKED PUDDING.

Ingredients—Four oz. of Rizine, 1 quart milk, 4 oz. of moist sugar, 1 oz. butter, grated nutmeg; or other flavouring, to taste. Mode: Put the Rizine into a pie-dish wash the sugar, pour in the milk, and stir well together, then put the butter in small pieces on the top, grate the nutmeg over, and bake until browned, about half-an-hour, in a moderate oven. One or two eggs added to above makes a nice custard.

4. RIZINE PUDDING, Baked.

PLAIN & ECONOMICAL; A NICE PUDDING FOR CHILDREN.

Ingredients—One teaspoonful Rizine, 2 tablespoonfuls moist sugar, 1 quart milk, ½ oz. butter, or two small tablespoonfuls chopped suet, ½ teaspoonful grated nutmeg. Mode: Same as No. 3.

5. BAKED RIZINE and JAM PUDDING.

Ingredients—Two ozs. Rizine to a pint of milk, sugar and lemon to taste, 2 eggs. Mode: Boil the milk and throw in the Rizine, allow it to cool, then stir in a tablespoonful of sugar and a little lemon to taste, place in a dish and spread the jam over in a layer. On this put the whites of 2 eggs beaten to a froth, the yellows can be mixed in the milk. Bake 30 minutes.

6. LEMON BLANC-MANGE.

Ingredients—One quart milk, the yolks 4 eggs, 3 ozs. Rizine, 6 ozs. pounded sugar, 1½ oz. fresh butter, the rind of 1 lemon, juice of 2 lemons, ½ oz. gelatine. Mode: Make a custard with the yolks of the eggs and 1 pint of the milk, and when done, put it into a basin; put half the remainder of the milk into a saucepan with the Rizine, fresh butter, lemon rind, and 3 ozs. of the sugar, and let these ingredients boil until the mixture is stiff, stirring them continually; when done, pour it into the bowl where the custard is, making both well together. Put the gelatine with the rest of the milk into a saucepan, and let it stand by the fire to dissolve; boil for a minute or two, stir carefully into the basin, adding 5 ozs. more of the pounded sugar. When cold, stir in the lemon juice, which should be carefully strained, and pour the mixture into a well-oiled mould, leaving out the lemon peel, and set the mould in a pan of cold water until wanted for table. Use eggs that have rich-looking yolks; and should the weather be very warm, rather a larger proportion of gelatine must be allowed. Time: About 3½ hour.

7. GATEAU DE RIZINE or RIZINE PUDDING. French Style.

Ingredients—To every quarter pound of Rizine, allow 1 quart of milk, the rind of a lemon, 1 teaspoonful salt, 4 ozs. butter, 6 eggs, bread crumbs, sugar to taste. Mode: Put the milk into a stewpan with the lemon rind, and let it infuse for half-an-hour, or until the former is well flavoured; then take out the peel, put Rizine into the milk, and let it gradually swell. Stir in the butter, salt and sugar, and when properly sweetened, add the yolks of the eggs, and then the whites, both of which should be well beaten, and added separately to the Rizine. Butter a mould, strew in some fine bread crumbs and let them be spread equally over it; then carefully pour in the Rizine, and bake the pudding in a slow oven for ½ an hour. Turn it out of the mould, and garnish the dish with preserved cherries, or any bright-coloured jelly or jam. This pudding would be exceedingly nice flavoured with vanilla.

HOW TO PREPARE RIZINE FOR CHILDREN'S FOOD.—Put half a pint milk into a small saucepan, with two dessert spoonfuls of Rizine. Keep stirred, allow to boil, and sweeten to taste—when it is ready for use.

When once you use Rizine for your Children's Food you will never use any other.

8. RIZINE CAKE.

Ingredients—Half lb. flour, ½ lb. Rizine, ½ lb. raisins, ½ lb. currants, ½ lb. butter, 3 ozs. sweet almonds, 1 sifted loaf sugar, 3 ozs. nutmeg, grated, 1 pint milk, 1 spoonful carbonate of soda. Mode: Stone and cut raisins into small pieces; wash, pick, and dry currants; melt the butter to a cream, but without boil it; blanch and chop the almonds and grate the nutmeg. When all these ingredients are thus prepared, mix them well together; make the milk warm, stir in the soda, with this liquid make the whole into a paste. Butter a mould, rather more than half fill it with the dough, and bake the cake in a moderate oven from 1½ to 2 hours, less time should it be made into two cakes. Time: 2 hours.

9. CHEESE SOUFFLÉ.

Ingredients—Two ozs. Rizine, 1 pint milk, ½ lb. cheese, a pinch of salt, ditto of pepper, a tablespoonful mustard, 3 eggs. Mode: Place the Rizine with the other ingredients in a dish, pour in the milk and stir the whole together with the yolks of the eggs. Whip the whites of the eggs to a froth, and spread on the top. Bake 15 minutes in a quick oven. Serve up quickly, or it will sink.

10. CHEESECAKES.

Ingredients—Two eggs, ½ lb. butter, ½ lb. sugar, ½ lb. Rizine, the juice of 1 lemon. Mode: Whisk the eggs thoroughly, and then add all the other ingredients, some paty-tins with pastry and fill them with the mixture, then bake for about 15 minutes in a hot oven.

11. RIZINE SOUPS.

4 ozs. Rizine, salt, cayenne and mace, 3 quarts stock (milk can be used instead of stock); boil 10 minutes and pass through a hair sieve. If artichokes are added, boil 6 or 8 for ½ hour, and add to the soup before pressing through the sieve.

For decorating clear soups, a little Rizine should be thrown into the saucepan immediately before dishing. This takes the place of vermicelli, sagu, macaroni, French paste, &c., and for thickening soups it must be boiled about ½ hour with the soup.

12. RIZINE PUDDING, Boiled (with Dried or Fresh Fruit; a nice Dish for the Nursery).

Ingredients—Half pound Rizine, 1 pint of any kind of fresh fruit that may be preferred, or 1 lb. raisins and currants. Mode: Tie the Rizine in a cloth, allowing room for it to swell, and put it into a saucepan of water; let it boil for ten minutes, then take it up, wash the cloth, stir the fruit, and tie it up again, tolerably tight, and put it into the water for the remainder of the time. Boil for another 15 minutes, or rather longer, and serve with sweet sauce if made with dried fruit, and with plain sifted sugar if made with fresh fruit.

NOTE.—This pudding is very good made with apples; they should be pared, cored, and cut into thin slices.

13. SPONGE CAKE.

Ingredients—Eight eggs, their weight in pounded loaf sugar, 1 tablespoonful of brandy, the weight of 5 in equal parts of flour and Rizine, the rind of 1 lemon. Mode: Put the eggs into one side of the scale, and take the weight of 8 in pounded loaf sugar, and the weight of 5 in good dry flour. Separate the yolks from the whites of the eggs; beat former, put them into a saucepan with the sugar, and let them remain over the fire until warm, keeping them well stirred. Then put them into a basin, add the grated lemon-rind mixed with the brandy, and stir these well together, dredging in the flour and Rizine very gradually. Whisk the whites of the eggs to a very stiff froth, stir them to the flour, &c., and beat the cake well for ½ hour. Put it into a buttered mould strewn with a little fine-sifted sugar, and bake the cake in a quick oven for 1½ hour. Care must be taken that it is into the oven immediately, or it will not be light. The flavouring of this cake may be varied by adding a few drops of essence of almonds instead of the grated lemon rind.



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Is the NEATEST,

CLEANEST, TIGHTEST,

SEAL

and HANDIEST STOPPER

in the WORLD.

FOR ALE and MINERAL WATERS.



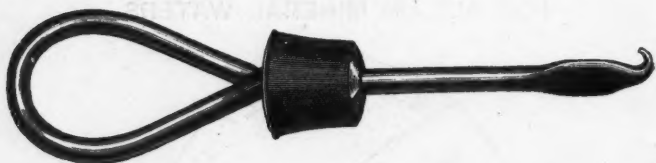
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Carbonated or Fermented Drinks in Seal Bottles never get flat, the Seal retains every particle of gas, while Corks and other Patent Stoppers are very uncertain. Tight, Clean Stoppers mean good drinks, and good drinks mean good custom.

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your best books in a crowd?
Because they are Stamped on every
yard."



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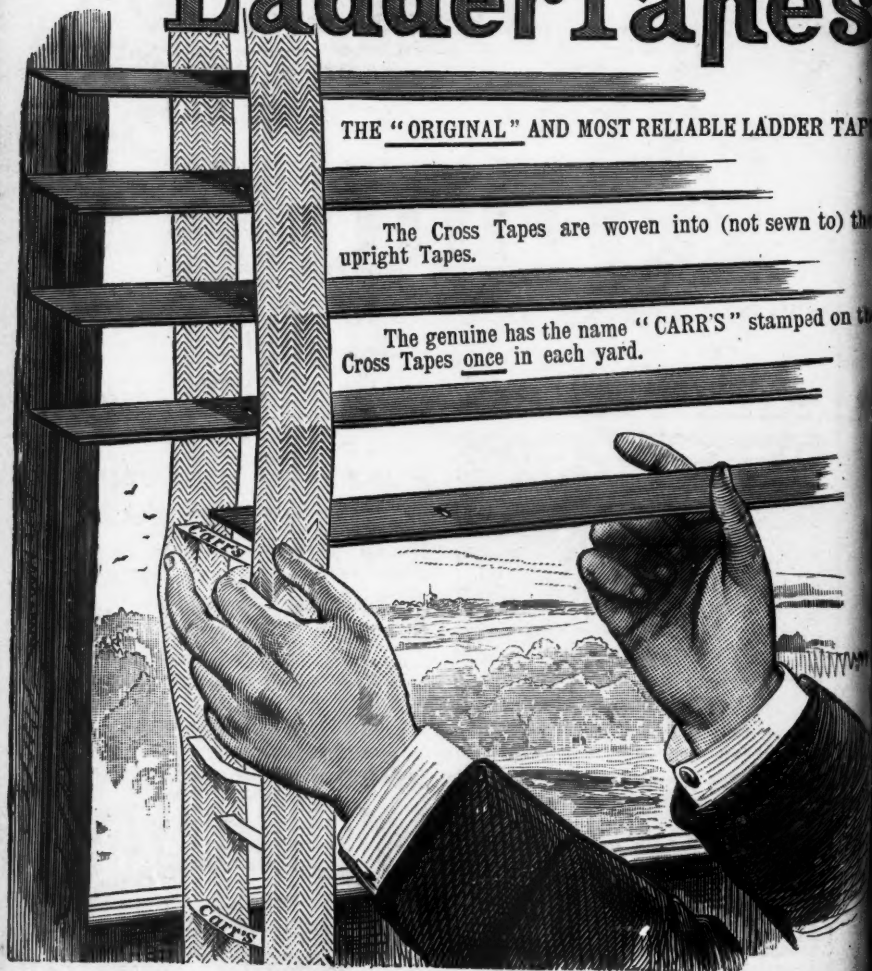
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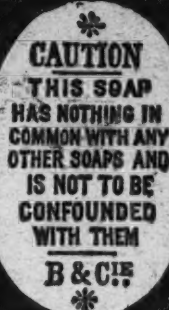
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